HOWARD M. FEDERSPIEL

Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State

The Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), 1923 to 1957

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The Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), 1923 to 1957

BY

HOWARD M. FEDERSPIEL

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PREFACE

Four general concerns absorbed the attention of Indonesian Muslim thinkers, activists and legalists during the sixty years of the twentieth century: i.e., seeking Islamic accommodation with national and local cultures, installing standard Islamic belief and practice as the *modus operandi* in the Indonesian region, devising appropriate political structures that both reflect Islamic values and promote Islamic life, and adapting modern thought and technology consistent with Indonesian-Muslim culture. Like Muslims everywhere, Indonesian Muslims have responded in different ways to such concerns. One major grouping has identified itself closely with traditional Middle Eastern Islamic beliefs, ritual and jurisprudence and attempted to make local culture, intellectual thought, and political institutions conform to that religious system. This grouping is generally known as *santri* in Indonesian culture and in this book the term will translated as "purist Muslim." A second grouping remained tied to indigenous Southeast Asian customs and values, have sometimes reshaped Islamic beliefs and ritual to mesh with some of the important features of these indigenous values, and have accepted technology and favored political solutions that seem to fit with this value system. This grouping, which has a wide number of different terms applied to it in Indonesian, is referred to as "nominal Muslim" here, largely to juxtapose it against the "purist Muslim." A third group has responded to Western secular thinking about the nation-state, the importance of nationally-evolved civic values, and the uses of technology for the creation of an affluent national economy. This grouping is identified as "nationalist," in this monograph. The interaction of these three attitudes has been a primary factor in the particular development of Indonesian social and political life over the past century. There are obvious problems with these generalities, but some such categorization is necessary to identify groupings in Indonesian life. Significantly these generalizations made here fit with the attempts of other writers on Indonesian Islam, even though terms and nomenclature differ slightly and the categorizations vary somewhat.[1]

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[1] See, in particular, Clifford Geertz, *Religion in Java* (Glencoe, Ill., 1960) and Koenjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture* (Singapore, 1985).

The purist Muslim group is the center of the following study. This group has been concerned with the application of Islamic values, standards and law and all have insisted that in the adoption of technological tools there must be an Islamic ethic governing their application, and that the state itself must be identified in some positive way with the sustenance, maintenance and further development of Islam in the nation. As the twentieth century closes it is apparent that purist groups are fairly united in their notions about most of these factors, but that was certainly not the case earlier in the century when even within the purist grouping there was no consensus regarding just what constituted proper religious practice, the application of Islamic standards to local culture, and the role of religion in the state. Here again we see another division that was once very sharp, but now is less apparent and certainly less divisive. Earlier, one faction, which will be termed "traditionalists" in this study, held that religious truth was contained in the writings of past Muslim scholars, particularly those of several noted jurists and theologians. The Nahdlatul Ulama was the primary representative of that faction. The other faction, which will be termed "modernist" in this study, held that new investigation and interpretation of religious fundamentals was necessary rather than relying on the tradition of past interpreters. The Muhammadiyah was the chief agent for that faction. The divide between these two factions was doctrinal and ideological in the first instance, was apparent in approaches to society and social problems, and had its ramifications in political alliances as well, as will be apparent later in this book.

In the modernist faction, an association called the Persatuan Islam (Muslim Union), arose in the 1920s and gave expression to a variation of the modernist Muslim approach, laying stress on the importance of Qur'ān and Sunnah of the Prophet as sources of religious values, belief, and behavior. Importantly, it centered on the promotion of purist Islam and, as such, it carried on a large number of activities—publishing, public debates, political action, intensification activities, and education—to attain its goals. It was ideological and highly controversial in its heyday, i.e., during the 1920s, 1930s and 1950s. This association during those years is the centerpiece of this particular study.

The value of the Persatuan Islam as a topic for scholarly research lies not in its organization, for it was small and loosely knit, nor did

it lie in its participation in Indonesian political life, for its activity was incidental and peripheral to the mainstream of political developments. Although its role in religious education made some impact on Indonesian Muslims, it was far less influential than several other organizations. In the same manner, its press was influential but never attained the stature and readership among Indonesians accorded the publications of several other Muslim organizations. Rather, the Persatuan Islam was important because it made an effort to define for Indonesian society just what it was that constituted Islam, what its basic principles were, and what the proper behavior of a Muslim really was. In this presentation of Islam the activists of the Persatuan Islam avoided vague concepts and generalizations—somewhat unusual in Indonesia—and dealt with the details and substance of religious behavior in Indonesia. Its members propounded very definite views concerning traditional Indonesian culture, regarding the institutions inspired by "Western" culture, and about traditional Muslim religious thought and practices.

What emerges from the study is a profile of a fundamentalist Muslim society, similar in outlook to that found in other parts of the Islamic world. Like other fundamentalists, the Persatuan Islam rejected the secular concept of the nation-state and called for establishment of a state and society structured to implement its concept of Islamic values. The insistence on Muslim unity in a single international community and on the necessity for an all-encompassing form of Islamic religious law was so dominant in the social and political viewpoint of the organization that it took the form of ideology. In Indonesia, a nation marked by a variety of political and social thought, this uncompromising political stance was not terribly popular, yet it attracted a significant number of followers and its message had an impact on the formulations of the Islamic political parties of the time. In general the Persatuan Islam was similar to other purist Indonesian Muslim movements in that it had similar concerns. At the same time, it was distinctive in that it had its own solutions for outstanding problems confronting Indonesian Muslims at the time. A study of the Persatuan Islam during this crucial period when Indonesia broke free of colonial rule and established itself as an independent nation-state, allows author and reader an opportunity to review the common problems confronting all Indonesian Muslims, to note how one group chose to resolve these problems,

and to compare the solutions of the Persatuan Islam with those of other organizations. The net result should be an understanding of the Indonesian Muslim community and its place in Indonesian national life.

This is a substantially revised second edition of a study originally published in 1970, which was actually a university dissertation submitted in 1966. On reflection many things needed changing to bring the writing into context for an audience at the turn of the century. First, the materials will be slightly recast so that the two major time periods have more definition in the study. Each major period—late colonial and liberal democracy—will consist of three chapters dealing with context, organization, and thought respectively. This change should sharpen the discussion and bring materials into clear focus. In the chapters providing context, discussion will be included to outline the political, religious and social environment of the periods under study from a general perspective of the colony/country, followed by a commentary on the major developments concerning the Islamic community in the East Indies/Indonesia of the time. These chapters should be useful in providing a fuller context than was available in the original study, and may prove useful in allowing greater perspective to emerge concerning the importance and significance of the Persatuan Islam's activities.

Second, evaluations of the Persatuan Islam will be made in each of the major sections outlining a period of history to ascertain whether the organization changed over time and whether its success was any greater in one period rather than another. Third, an attempt will be made to juxtapose the approach and realm of activities with three other groups—first, the formulators of modernism at the turn of the century, i.e. Jamāluddīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā; second with the fundamentalist activists Aʿlā Mawdūdī and Hassan al-Bannā', and third with the Indonesian neo-Modernist intellectuals Nurcholish Madjied and Dawam Rahardjo. This comparison should provide insight as to the place of the Persatuan Islam in the overview Islamic scene in the twentieth century. Finally, new references will be added to bring later scholarship into play and provide the reader with a more contemporary view of the overall scholarly literature available on the study of Islam in Indonesia.

Indonesian language materials, largely pamphlets, books and periodicals written by members of the Persatuan Islam, were the chief source of material for this essay. These works can be found scattered among several Indonesian libraries, and partly in United States and Canadian libraries. Early in its existence, the Persatuan Islam established a publishing house and issued a large number of works by its own members outlining the beliefs and attitudes of the Persatuan Islam on a variety of subjects. These works in particular served as basic source material for this study. Libraries were consulted in Indonesia, the Netherlands, Canada and the United States. In addition there were interviews with a number of people in the Persatuan Islam or knowledgeable about it. All these sources are listed in the bibliographic sources at the conclusion of the book.

Spelling conventions follow the following rules:

1. Personal names use the spelling of the country in which they are native. Hence Indonesian names are rendered according to the spelling conventions there, while Arabic names are rendered according to the transliteration system common for converting Arabic to English.

2. Names of organizations and are rendered in their original language with an English translation in parenthesis at the first use and at other convenient points when that organization is being discussed. While English labels sometimes seem easier to handle, as with the Partai Nasional Indonesia as the Indonesian Nationalist Party, there are too many others that have no translation at all, as the Muhammadiyah, or make little sense, as the Nahdlatul Ulama (Renaissance of the Muslim Scholars).

3. Regarding Islamic terminology and nomenclature, an attempt has been made to render as much as possible in English equivalents, so that Ṣalāt is rendered as "prayer," for example. When specialized terms, such as "ijtihad" are described, the original term is given at the first offering and then an English description is used thereafter.

4. Titles of books, journals, magazines, articles, pamphlets, fatāwā, and other writings are rendered in English translation whenever possible. This is done for readability. Magazines are often known among scholars by their Indonesian or Arabic titles, so those original language titles are included in parentheses at the first usage and in other situations where context requires it. In footnotes the original

language information for all these titles is given, so that a coordination can be made. In the bibliography all works are listed under author, by the titles in which the text was published. Both *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* are considered books, but they have no real equivalents in English, so they are rendered in Arabic transliteration. Fatāwā (singular: fatwā) are called that since there is no good, accepted translation.

5. Whenever there is room for confusion the matter is either explained in the text, in a footnote or in the glossary.

The aim of the foregoing attempts to remove foreign words from the text as much as possible is meant to assist readability and understanding. Some reviewers will not like the arrangement, of course, as not providing foreign terms immediately in the text, but I know my readership consists of large numbers of people who are not much interested in the original terminology, but in the information and analysis provided by the study. However, for those who are interested in the terminology everything is here in the book, but in the footnotes, endnotes, bibliography and glossary. Finally, those wanting the scholarly format should use the original dissertation or the first edition of this work.[2]

This second edition was prepared at McGill University and Ohio State in the 1998–99 academic year. In addition to older materials that were collected over the years from various places, the libraries of McGill University, the Ohio State University, and the University of Leiden, and also the General Archives of the Netherlands were consulted specifically in connection with this particular edition. Research institutions consulted throughout the years in connection with both editions are included in the bibliography. Thanks is extended to the authorities of those institutions who made use of those facilities possible, and for all the assistance that was rendered by the staff members.

This volume is dedicated to the memory of John Seabury Thomson (1922 to 1998) my long-term friend and valued colleague, who was there with encouragement when I wrote the original study in the early morning hours at the U.S. Department of State from 1963 to 1966.

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[2] Howard M. Federspiel, "The Persatuan Islam" (Islamic Union). Ph.D. dissertation presented to McGill University, Montreal, Canada, 1966; Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia.* (Ithaca, 1970).

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

A. *The Birth and Development of an Islamic Culture in Indonesia*

1. *Arrival and Characteristics of the Early Muslim Community of Southeast Asia*

The dominant religious pattern at the time Islam began large scale conversions in the Indonesian Archipelago—between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries—was a mixture of pagan animism and a mysticism superimposed on it during the Buddhist and Hindu periods.[1] Animism found expression in nature worship, which acknowledged the existence of spirits in living persons, in the dead, and in inanimate objects. During the ascendancy of Hinduism and Buddhism in the archipelago, between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, this animistic belief survived in a subdued form and exercised considerable influence on these two religions. There is evidence that many devotees of these South Asian religions were dedicated to worship and practice that conformed to orthodoxy as it was expressed in the Indian subcontinent of the time. Still Hindu practices and beliefs, notably those of the Shaiva sect, and Mahayana Buddhism, entering the archipelago through Indian and Malay trade exchange, succeeded in large part because they incorporated and adapted to these indigenous religious beliefs. The human and puppet threater shows and the traditional orchestra, which developed strong ties with mystical practices and Hindu mythology during this period, continued to reflect Javanese values and to mirror the Javanese outlook on life.[2] Borobudur, the great monument near Yogyakarta, laden with art work and architectural features that clearly identify it as Buddhist, shows, in its lower courses, concern for ancestor worship and animistic belief and practice.[3] The research of Dutch ethnologists of the late 19th century, such as G.A. Wilken, A.C. Kruijt and P.J. Veth,[4] indicate that this animism was an important feature of everyday life

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[1] Kenneth P. Landon, *Southeast Asia: Crossroads of Culture* (Chicago, 1948), 138–139.
[2] D.G.E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia* (London, 1955), 9.
[3] *Ibid.*, 48, 53; Parmono Atmadi, *Some Architectural Design Principles of Temples in Java* (Jogyakarta, 1985), 10–19.
[4] Hall, *History*, 48, 53.

on Java even into the latter years of the nineteenth century and throughout the region of Southeast Asia populated by the Malay and Indonesian peoples. These scholars theorized on the basis of their observations that these indigenous belief patterns predated the entry of Hinduism and Buddhism into the Southeast Asian region.

Islam as the religion of Arab, Arabo-Indian, Persian, and, later, Chinese, traders was a feature of the Southeast entrepot ports, probably starting in the seventh century, but was not taken up by many local peoples for several hundred years. Apparently Islam became acceptable to the Malay-Indonesian peoples only when it appeared in a form that was familiar to them. This seems to have happened when traders and their accompanying religious teachers from Gujerat and other cities on the Indian coastline became prominent in the trading activities that centered on Southeast Asia as a place of transit between China and the areas to the West, and as a collection place for the pepper and spices of the region itself. These Muslim traders and priests followed a mystical form of Islam, that had been subject to Hindu, Ismāʿīlī Shīʿah influence and local animisms of the Indian coastal areas. This "Gujerati" version of Islam struck a responsive chord among the Indonesians, and it "was easy for the Malay-Indonesian peoples to understand it, appreciate it, and use it."[5] Taking over where Buddhism left off, Islamic mysticism was able to make considerable impact on the Malay-Indonesian peoples, and, in the early period the Muslim mystic was highly regarded and honored. In north Sumatra in the last half of the sixteenth century, the most highly respected religious scholars were all mystics,[6] and on Java the many saints, who, according to Javanese Muslim history, were responsible for the spread of Islam on that island, were also mystics.[7] The theologians and jurists, so influential in the Middle Eastern variety of Islam, took second place to the mystics in the early period, and, even until the twentieth century Indonesian religious teachers noted for legal or theological knowledge were usually also mystics.

Many indigenous religious practices continued after Islam's arrival, some openly, but most under the guise of being part of Islam itself. Veneration of local saints and heroes continued, with the addition

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[5] Landon, *Southeast*, 139.

[6] G.W.J. Drewes, "Nūruddīn Ar-Rānīrī's Ḥujjat al-Ṣiddīq li-Dafʿ al-Zindīq Reexamined," *JMBRAS*, 44, 2 (1974), 287–289.

[7] C.C. Berg, "The Islamization of Java," *Studia Islamica*, IV (1950), 111–142.

of new personalities associated with Islam. The belief that certain numbers and names had magical and mystical qualities took on an Islamic appearance by including the names of "the first four caliphs, the four Arabic letters that spelled the name of the Prophet and of Allāh, the twelve signs of the zodiac, the twelve imams of the Shīʿah, and others."[8] Exorcism was held in high regard, and Islamic prescriptions and references were introduced into the practice. Indonesian charms took on an Islamic look, by attaching to them the Islamic confession of faith and citations from the *Qurʾān*.

That Islam compromised with existing religious patterns when it was introduced into the archipelago is not surprising, since Muslims, from the time of the Prophet Muhammad, have accepted nominal Islamization of the inhabitants in any new area. This was the pattern in the first great expansion of Islam in the first century A.H., when Syria, Egypt and Persia came into the Muslim sphere of influence; in the succeeding centuries the population was induced to accept Islam for political and economic reasons, and still later this belief was strengthened and intensified. In the South Asian region, beginning in the tenth Christian century, proselytization followed the establishment of Muslim political rule and was marked by much cultural syncretism, some of which was branded by later purist Muslim teachers as heretical. So far as faith is concerned, Muslims traditionally accepted the confession of faith as sufficient for considering a person a fellow Muslim. So far as Muslim society was concerned, however, this forbearance, while extended during proselytization, did not imply permanent disregard for practices regarded by the religious teachers as contrary to Islamic teachings. Instruction, contact with other Muslim areas, and the guidance of Muslim rulers were intended to deepen religious belief and practice with each succeeding generation. If this argument of incremental Islamization is accepted, then the deepening of Islam in Southeast Asia might be regarded as still taking place. In following this viewpoint it can be asserted that over the past four hundred years Muslims in the region have slowly altered their perceptions of Islam, since the heterodox religious trends of the early period have slowed in momentum, and more standard Sunnī Islamic practices and patterns have slowly gained in importance. This trend is discernible when comparing the

[8] *Ibid.*, 111–142.

tone of Islam in the mid and late nineteenth century, when the Naqshabandiyah Order became prominent, and modified common religious behavior away from mystical practice its members regarded as heterodox toward "standard mystical behavior," i.e., as defined by the 11th century Muslim scholar al-Ghazālī, and toward an appreciation for general behavior as defined by the Shāfi'ī school of jurisprudence. This was followed in the early part of the twentieth century by a wave of reformist thinking, which had a heavy impact in redefining Muslim belief and behavior toward widely recognized Sunnī beliefs, practices and behavior. After mid-century the Islamic nature of Muslim society was again intensified by the "revivalist" movement, which moved Indonesian Muslims to greater appreciation of basic rites and practices regarded as fundamental to all Muslims.[9] This deepening of belief and strengthening of behavior was not, until recently, at all rapid nor did it affect all parts of the population with an even impact. Consequently some parts of Indonesian society appear more concerned with Islam than others, even though the process of reform has seemingly touched all parts of the archipelago.

2. *Factors in the Development of an Islamic Community*

The development of an Islamic consciousness and a Muslim community in Southeast Asia has been affected historically by several important factors which are of direct relevance to this study. They are three in number. The first was an "Islamic lifeline," that is, a relationship between Southeast Asia and another world region more knowledgeable about Islam from which its people could learn doctrine, history, rites, practice and other matters of vital interest to a developing Muslim community. In this case the lifeline was a relationship between Southeast Asia and the Middle East, the homeland of Islam itself. This was geo-economic in nature. As we have seen above, Islam originally arrived in Southeast Asia by means of the trade routes. Those sea routes extended from the Middle East across the Indian Ocean along the coast of India, across the Andaman Sea, through the Straits of Malacca to China and the Spice Islands of

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[9] Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun* (The Hague and Bandung, 1958) 40; W.F. Wertheim, "Bourgeios Currents in Religion," in A. Ibrahim (et al.), eds., *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia* (Singapore, 1985), 111–115.

Eastern Indonesia.[10] Apparently first a religion of traders and port people along much of the route, even in China itself, Islam finally become accepted by some rulers of the many city-states of the Indonesian archipelago and a conversion of their populations from nominal Buddhism and Hinduism to nominal Islam gradually took place. As stated above, mystics from the West—Arabia, Persia and coastal India—were the primary agents in Islam's establishment in Southeast Asia. It was the contact back along the trade routes that allowed the transfer of Islamic culture, in part from the Indian coast settlements of Arab-Indian communities, and also from the Middle East directly. In a landmark study on the trade routes edited by D.S. Richards, a number of historians of Islam describe the general condition of trade throughout Asia and Africa and provide considerable insight into the pattern of trade routes from the Arab world through Southeast Asia to China and the Indonesian spice islands, where the points of transfer were, and how the different populations along the way fit into the comprehensive whole.[11] R. Di Meglio, contributing the specific study on Southeast Asia in that symposium, detailed in particular the conditions at Malacca, the leading entrepot port of the Southeast Asian region, and how it was possible for Arabs to undertake proselytizing activities from there and other ports along the trade routes.[12] L. Brakel, in a 1980's analysis, gives us further insight into the different peoples who found their way along the trade routes to the Southeast Asian region, and demonstrates both the extent of the trade and transfer of knowledge that took place.[13] On the basis of these, and similar works of scholarship, we are aware of the importance of the trade routes to the importation and sustenance of Islam in the region.

As we shall see below, the European domination of Asian trade beginning in the sixteenth century severely dislocated those "Islamic" trade routes, but certainly did not destroy them, so that there was a continuing flow of people, goods and ideas along the life line even

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[10] G.R. Tibbetts, *A Study of Arabic Texts Containing Material on Southeast Asia* (Leiden, 1979), 66–99.

[11] D.S. Richards, *Islam and the Trade of Asia* (Oxford and Philadelphia, 1970).

[12] R.R. Di Meglio, "Arab Trade with Indoensia and the Malay Peninsula from the 8th to the 16th Century" in *Ibid.*, 105–135.

[13] L.F. Brakel, "Persian Influence on Malay Literature," *Abr-Nahrain*, IX (1969–70), 1–16.

into the twentieth century. B. Schrieke explains that the Islamic teachers from the West traveled to the Indonesian region to teach at the courts of princes and at various religious schools around the time of the Dutch arrival.[14] The diary of Abdulkadir Munshi at the beginning of the nineteenth century related that most of his training in Islam came from itinerant scholars from the Indian Ocean area and the Middle East wending their way into Singapore as they moved from place to place on the trade routes in search of groups of potential students that they could teach and thereby earn their livelihoods.[15] In the late nineteenth century significant numbers of Arabs from the Hadramaut began to immigrate to Southeast Asia in search of economic opportunity, serving there as small entrepreneurs, as middle men in economic transactions, and as teachers of religion. This immigration continued well into the 1930's.

With these missionary-travelers came religious tracts, texts, and other publications explaining Islam's teachings produced elsewhere; they were recognized as important in the general Islamic world of the time. Dutch and English administrator-scholars of the colonial era collected evidence of this considerable influx of Islamic materials in their compilations of manuscripts that they assembled to better understand the peoples that they ruled. The collections of W. Marsden at London and those cataloged by Ph.S. Van Ronkel, Th. W. Juynboll and others at Leiden and Batavia are rich with examples of this imported literature on Islam and with the offspring polyglot texts that this literature inspired among religious writers in Southeast Asia itself.[16]

The geo-economic links between Southeast Asia and the Middle East worked from East to West as well. Southeast Asian Muslims, including large numbers from the Indonesian archipelago, visited the

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[14] B.J.O. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, (The Hague and Bandung, 1957), II, 239–240.

[15] Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsji, *The Hikayat Abdullah*, trans. and ed. by A.H. Hill (Kuala Lumpur, 1970), 55–56.

[16] University of London, "SOAS Collection of Indonesian and Malay Manuscripts"; R. Frederick and L.W.C. van den Berg, *Codicum arabicorum in Bibliotheca Societatus Artium et Scientiarum quae Bataviae floret asservatorum catalogus* (Batavia and La Haye, 1873); Netherlands. Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, *Supplement van den catalogus van de Javaansche en Madoereesche handschriften der Leidsche Universiteits-bibliotheek*, ed. H.H. Juynboll (Leiden, 1899), 2v.; Netherlands. Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, *Supplement-catalogus der Maleische en Minangkabausche handschriften in de Leidsche Universiteits-bibliotheek*, ed. Ph.S. Van Ronkel (Leiden, 1921); and Netherlands. Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, *Catalogus van de Javaansche en Madoereesche handschriften der Leidsche Universiteits-bibliotheek*, ed. A.C. Vreede (Leiden, 1892).

Middle East. Most of these travelers to the West journeyed to participate in the pilgrimage at Makkah, and a small number of them studied at Makkah, or in Cairo, and at other centers of learning in the Middle East and South Asia.[17] These contacts served as a conduit for religious teachings and as a means of introducing "new" thinking into the Southeast Asian region, reflecting the trends that were going on elsewhere in the Islamic world. Sometimes, as in the early nineteenth century when Wahhābism, carried back to West Sumatra by pilgrims, produced the Padri movement,[18] the ideas reflected trends that sought to spread particular beliefs through militant action in societies of the archipelago. At other times, as in the late nineteenth century, when Aḥmadiyah beliefs were introduced by students returning from India, the ideas were at odds with generally accepted Sunnī Muslim belief.[19] Usually, however, as the Dutch administrator C.S. Hurgronje noted in his report to the Netherlands Indies Administration on this problem late in the nineteenth century, the contact with the outside Muslim world provided by the pilgrimage and students served to strengthen Sunnī Muslim religious patterns and worked against heterodoxy.[20] In his way of thinking "right thinking Muslims" were concerned with religious observance, obeyed the law and accepted conditions as determined by God. This made them ideal subjects in comparison with those not understanding their religion well, who were subject to other passions. The "Islamic lifeline" then was a significant factor in maintaining and strengthening the presence and appearance of Islam in Southeast Asia.

The second of the complicating factors was European colonial control of the Indonesian archipelago and most of the neighboring areas of Southeast Asia beginning in the sixteenth century. Like Muslims and Islam, the Europeans found their way to Southeast Asia mostly by the way of the trade routes; only the Spanish discovered

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[17] C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century*. Trans. J.H. Monahan (Leiden, 1931), 291.

[18] The *Padri* wars, intermittently between 1785 and 1838 in West Sumatra, was an attempt of a local Muslim group to apply *Wahhābī* ideals to Minangkabau society. The movement was particularly opposed to local custom, particularly matrilineal inheritance patterns, which they believed was at odds with custom (*adat*). Christine Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism in a Changing Peasant Economy* (London, 1995), 243–244.

[19] G.F. Pijper, *Studien over de Geschiedenis van de Islam in Indonesia 1900–1950* (Leiden, 1977), 130–131.

[20] C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Verspreide Geschriften*, (Bonn and Leipzig, 1923–27) VI, 219–220.

Southeast Asia by coming across the Pacific Ocean, but on the basis of information from the Portuguese, proceeding them from the West. The arrival of the Europeans in Southeast Asia—the Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, French and British—came at a crucial time in relation to the establishment of Islam as the dominant religion of the region. European arrival brought new players into insular Southeast Asia, then in a period of political decentralization and restructuring, who ultimately changed the shape and direction of political and economic life in the region with a consequent impact on Islam as well. First, the emerging political powers of the region, mostly Muslim sultanates located on the coasts of Sumatra, the Malayan Peninsula, Java, Sulawesi and in the Moluccas, and Muslim kingdoms on Java, lost their freedom of political and economic action, in some cases losing their identity entirely or, in most cases, becoming client states of the colonial powers. After nearly a hundred years of turmoil, particularly among the Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch trading companies, Dutch control was ultimately consolidated in most of the region by 1648. As a result of these changed political conditions Islam emerged as a point of identification among Southeast Asians in opposition to the Europeans who were identified as Christian. The fierce defense of local interests put forth during the 100 year conflict by several rulers—at Aceh, Malacca, Bantam, and Jepara, among others,—using Islamic symbols to rally their populations, made Islam a vital part of the political landscape. Conversion to Islam among the population of the hinterlands seems to have been accelerated during the onset of the colonial intrusion, apparently as an important point of indigenous identification.[21] Moreover, after Dutch supremacy was established, the sector of the population strongly identifying with Islam in the Malay-Indonesian region was to remain opposed to European control for the ensuing three centuries, always representing an alternate way of life from the colonial order instituted by the Dutch. Sometimes this Muslim sector undertook anti-Dutch actions when opportunities presented themselves, such as in the second Java War, when a succession struggle at Yogyakarta pitted one contender for the throne backed by the Dutch, againsyt another contender backed by the Islamic sector. The antipathy of the Southeast Asia Muslim to European rule was most pronounced in the Dutch-Acehnese

[21] B.H.M. Vlekke, *Nusantara: A History of Indonesia.* (Bandung, 1959), 97–98.

War (1884 to 1911) when the Acehnese sultan called on his subjects to fight a "holy war" against Dutch military forces despatched to bring the territory under direct colonial rule, and the Muslim teachers answered his call by mobilizing elements of the population in guerrilla tactics against Dutch-led forces.[22] Other examples exist as well, such as those at Jambi in the early twentieth century and at the battle of Surabaya against returning Dutch forces in 1945. However, care must be taken in making it clear that this was only one outlook among Muslims, for many other Muslims, for whatever reason, made advantageous connections with European traders first and later with colonial administrators. These were often made for political purposes and trade reasons, but seldom implied a permanent acceptance of European dominance in the region. Hadji Agus Salim, Muslim activist in the early twentieth century who was prominent in the independence struggle, found it expedient to work for the Dutch during parts of his career and also to follow a strategy of cooperation with colonial authorities in order to gain his political ends.[23]

The establishment of Dutch rule over the Indonesian Archipelago, while initially speeding the conversion to Islam, impeded—sometimes intentionally and at other times inevitably—the development of Islam from a nominal acceptance into a more serious regard for Islamic belief and practice. European economic domination, with its mercantile practices of monopoly and close regulation of trade, inadvertently lessened the influence of the foreign Muslim trader on the Indonesian believer. The Netherlands became the Indonesian Archipelago's primary trader, and in line with its own interests trade with India and the Middle East was curtailed for a more lucrative trade with Europe.[24] Improving technology, especially in ship design and propulsion, made direct trade possible, thereby severely diminishing trade along the traditional Arab trade route via India and the Middle East. Moreover, foreign trade was almost completely controlled

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[22] E.S. De Klerck, *History of the Netherland East Indies* (Rotterdam, 1975), II, 342–373; Alfian, "Islamic Modernism in Indonesian Politics: The Muhammadijah Movement during the Dutch Colonial Period (1912–1942)" Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the University of Wisconsin, 1969.

[23] Haji Agus Salim, *Djedjak Langkah* . . . (Jakarta, 1954), xiii–xviii; see also *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, I, 518–526, 602–606, and Ibrahim, *Readings on Islam*, 61–69.

[24] Hall, *History*, 312; Schrieke, *Sociological Studies*, II, 49–79.

by the Dutch themselves, thereby further altering the contact between the foreign Muslim trader and the Indonesian Muslim. Overall, however, the "Islamic life line" that had been provided by the dominance of Arab shipping prior to the arrival of the Europeans was severely changed with the European assumption of trading supremacy. It can only be speculated as to how much influence this change from Arab to European control actually had on the long-term development of Islamic thought and values within Southeast Asia. A strong case can be made that the maturing process of Indonesian Islam was adversely affected by curtailing a continuous supply of religious personalities, mystics, legalists, scholars of the various sciences of Islam et.al, and materials, notably creeds, *Qur'anic* commentaries, medical books, histories, jurisprudential works, the record of the lives of saints and numerous other works. This is not to say that much of this transfer of personnel and material did not happen anyway, only that the amount and intensity was appreciably lessened as a result of the historical change.

The third complicating factor was found in the structure of Southeast Asian society itself, based as it was on a strong solidarity at the village level. Here the rights of the individual were subordinated to community obligations. The importance of the individual believer, the priority of Islamic religious law, and the spiritual responsibility to a source outside the community were all contradictory to the concept of the all-encompassing, closed community. In accepting Islamic religious dogma, therefore, the village members found it difficult to adopt Islamic social principles as well, or, the reverse as well, to abandon the customs and practices common to the community even though they were often contrary to Islamic practices.[25] Accordingly, it was argued by many Dutch scholars of the late colonial period that Islam was only acceptable in so far as it was able to exist alongside custom and to provide religious sanction for many non-Islamic practices. For example, the celebration of the birthday celebration for the Prophet Muḥammad was regarded as not conflicting with standard custom and became a popular institution. The accompanying meals or feasts, originally celebrating animistic occasions, were given sanction by the inclusion of Muslim prayers and readings from religious texts. The rice tax, roughly corresponding to Islamic poor tax,

[25] Benda, *Crescent*, 82.

early became very popular since its distribution to the poor enabled them to take part in the general feasting marking *Hari Raja*, the Indonesian version of *ʿĪd al-fiṭr*, the day of communal celebration marking the end of the fasting month. Marriage, circumcision, funerals and other ceremonies were given certification by inclusion of standard Islamic terminology, prayers and expressions and forms, even though much of the content of these rites was dictated by custom common to such ceremonies before Islam arrived in the archipelago.[26]

Comparatively late in the colonial era Dutch legalists dealing with customary law developed the term *in receptio*, indicating that Islamic prescriptions were valid in society only in so far as they were accepted by communities and became in fact part of local custom itself. Actually, Islam encountered considerable resistance in the execution of its legal precepts, which were sometimes at variance with established custom. Land laws and inheritance were the most troublesome areas, and Islam made very little progress in displacing custom on these matters.[27] There is evidence that some dedicated Muslims were concerned that their behavior should accord with that laid out in standard religious lessons; accordingly they followed popular legal treatises, such as *Islamic Fundamentals*, intended to shape the character of the reader and help the believer develop the behavior such texts asserted were called for by Islam.[28] Devoted followers of this sort seem to have been in a distinct minority.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the study and general observations of the Dutch scholars G.A. Wilken, C. Van Vollenhoven and C. Snouck Hurgronje on the role of religion and custom in the lives of Indonesians resulted in the adoption of an official policy designed to encourage some aspects of religious activity, but giving custom clear precedence over religion.[29] The pilgrimage and Muslim social and educational activities were encouraged, since they were considered to increase standard religious belief and lessen the chances of adopting fanatical religious beliefs inimical to Dutch rule. At the same time, the government was to suppress sternly those new ideas and activities among Muslims that could threaten Dutch control over

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[26] D.G. Stibbe and H. Colijn, *Neerlands Indië* (Amsterdam, 1935), 210–233.
[27] Landon, *Southeast Asia*, 159–163.
[28] John Ball, *Indonesian Legal History 1602–1848* (Sydney, 1982), 45–47.
[29] See Vlekke, *Nusantara*, 323–328; C. Van Vollenhoven, *Het Adatrecht van Nederlandsch-Indië* (Leiden, 1918–31), 3v.

the Indonesian Archipelago.[30] This policy set aside some of the religious law that had come into limited use in several courts of law during the Dutch colonial period, on grounds that administration of justice should rest on the mores and customs of the various areas. This policy confirmed Dutch preference for limited, controlled contact between Indonesian Muslims and Muslims outside Indonesia, and for the closed community regulated by custom that limited Islam's hold in the villages.[31] Accordingly, Dutch officials recognized only a thin area of family life—marriage, divorce, reconciliation—as constituting Muslim law and only for those Indonesians who specifically requested it. Accordingly, such intervention in the social system did affect the place and intensity of religious belief, for by fortifying custom and de-emphasizing Islam, they set a course that was to prevail all the way into the republican era some sixty years later.

3. *Population Groups Supporting Islam*

Three interrelated groups were responsible for developing standard Sunnī religious thought in Indonesia: the immigrant Muslim groups, primarily Arabs from the Hadramawt, the religious officials in the schools and mosques, and the Muslim merchants. There was considerable overlap among these groups. As we saw earlier, Indian Muslim and Arab Muslim traders had been the means by which Islam first arrived in the Southeast Asian region, but with the passage of most regional trade over to the Dutch themselves, the immigrants took on new roles. They still entered the Southeast Asian region, at times in appreciable numbers, where they served as trade intermediaries between the Dutch and local Indonesian peoples very much like the Chinese. In this capacity they bought goods from the local population and sold them to the larger government collectors and they furnished goods needed in the villages. They also became businessmen in certain economic enterprises, such as cloth manufacture, and competed with local businessmen. The Arab immigrants assumed a place of high respect within Indonesian and Malay soci-

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[30] Hurgronje, *Verspreide*, II, 219–220. See also G.H. Bousquet, *A French View of the Netherlands Indies*, trans. Philip E. Lilenthal (Paris, 1939), 6–21; and Aqib Suminto, *Politik Islam Hindia Belanda* (Jakarta, 1985), 199–211.

[31] See H. Westra, "Custom and Muslim Law in the Netherlands Indies," *Transactions of the Grotius Society* XXV(1939), 151–167.

ety and contributed a large number of religious scholars to the service of the local Muslim communities. These Arabs brought with them a brand of Sunnī Islamic belief and practice that, while marked by some heterodox practices, contributed substantially to the development of Sunnī standards in Indonesia. This role was somewhat offset, however, by the Hadrami Arab tendency to stress racial association with the Prophet Muhammad as a means of attaining status among Southeast Asian Muslims.[32] More will be said about this matter later. The local Muslim trader meanwhile also continued to play important economic and religious roles, but without the same high respect of the Arab immigrants.

The second group fostering Islamic standards were teachers of Islamic sciences in Muslim oriented schools. In the lower classes of such schools, instruction consisted of memorizing passages from the *Qur'ān* in Arabic, with a heavy emphasis on the structure of Arabic grammar and syntax. At the higher levels, in boarding schools called *pondoks* and *pesantrens*, teaching consisted of more memory work in the "sciences" of Islam, primarily in jurisprudential texts and mystical practice.[33] Such schools, usually located in rural areas, were usually remote from the colonial life-styles of the urban areas and pursued a puristic view of Islam, which was stylized and lived in accord with Islamic tenets developed by the scholars of the 10th to 18th centuries, such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Nawāwī, al-Sayūṭī, ibn Kathīr, and al-Shaukānī.[34] The religious schools produced persons who viewed religion as more important than custom, and must be regarded as having made a distinct contribution to the development of Indonesian Islam in this effort. At the same time such education produced a learned sector and gave society outside the colonial centers a group capable of filling positions that needed literacy, particularly the courts of local rulers. On Java this group of religiously-oriented people who studied at some time during their lifetime in the Islamic religious schools came to be known as *santri*, in apposition to others in the rural society who were nominally Muslim, but uneducated in Islamic doctrine and uncommitted to a pious life wherein the believer carefully

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[32] See J.M. van der Kroef, *Indonesia in the Modern World* (Bandung, 1956), I, 253–255; L.W.C. van den Berg, *Le Hadramauth et les colones Arabs dans l'Archipel Indien.* (Batavia, 1886), I, 151–172; Van Vollenhoven, *Adatrecht*, 101–114.

[33] Frederick M. Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (New York and London, 1985), 307.

[34] Th.W. Juynboll, *Handleiding tot de kennis van De Mohammedaansche Wet volgens de leer der Sjafi'itische School* (Leiden, 1930), 373–377.

fulfilled the dictates of Islamic teachings.[35] It is difficult to understate the importance of such Islamic schools to the fostering of an indigenous cultural spirit, which were interlocked through teacher-student relationships, intermarriage and commonality of approach to the study of religion. The *pesantren* system was one source of nationalist activists in the first half of the twentieth century; promoted support for the Republican government when the Revolution arrived in the late 1940's, and survived into the education system of the independent Indonesian state after 1950.[36]

Islam made equally good progress among the merchant class, which consisted for the most part of persons who had broken away from the closed community for economic reasons, and were not bound by the customs and laws of usage that impeded Islam's progress in the village. In a study of Javanese Muslim merchants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, C. Dobbin shows that these businessmen often operated outside of their own home communities and competed very favorably with the Chinese, who are usually regarded in colonial literature as the most dynamic of all traders in the Indies.[37] Freed from the narrow concepts of village custom, the Muslim merchants sought ideas and concepts that fit with their own more diverse experiences and found them in Islam.[38] As middle-class merchants they had financial means that could be expended on the education of their children and on fulfilling their religious obligation to undertake the pilgrimage, which consequently brought them into closer contact with religion. L. Khuluq relates that the merchants were often instrumental in the establishment of new schools in the period before World War II since one of the devices used by school masters to establish their leading disciples in schools of their own was to locate a suitable town, arrange for the marriage of the disciple to the daughter of a well-to-do Muslim merchant resident there and convince the merchant to pay the costs of establishing the new

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[35] Usman Pelly, "The Dichotomy between Intellectual and Ulema," *Mizan* 2, 3 (1986), 62–73.

[36] Zamakhsyary Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (Jakarta, 1982), 33–43; Mahmud Yunus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta, 1960), 96–120.

[37] Christine Dobbin, "Accounting for the Failure of the Muslim Javanese Business Class . . . (c. 1880–1940)," *Archipel*, 48 (1994), 88–89.

[38] Cf. Geertz, *Religion*, 217, 231.

school.[39] Significantly, it had been merchants who had been responsible for the initial spread of Islam throughout Indonesia, and it was perhaps natural that their successors should also be interested in furthering religious development. The Indonesian nobility, on the other hand, while adopting Islam as a religion and sometimes acting as a patron for religious scholars, was generally more concerned with court ritual, which called for forms of behavior which took emphasis away from strict religious behavior.[40] The letters of the Javanese princess R. Kartini explain the nominal relationship of the court culture to Islam and offers some trenchant views on it.[41]

In general then, on the eve of the twentieth century Islam was firmly established in the Indonesian area and enjoyed a continuing relationship with the Middle East through a number of contacts. There are firm indications that the "lifeline" with the Middle East had a practical impact and had contributed to a long-range standardization of Islamic belief, practice and behavior. At the same time there were considerable hindrances to this Islamization process, most notably in the generally closed and regulated communities of the Indonesian region, and in the policies of the Dutch colonial administrators of the Indies, who pursued policies that inevitably, and sometimes intentionally, adversely affected the development of the Islamic community. While Islam was a religion shared by large sectors of the Indonesian peoples, three groups in particular—the Hadrami Arabs, the teacher/scholars of Islam, and the Muslim merchants—served as mainstays of the Islamic communities and worked for the development and intensification of its mission. This is not to deny, however, that there were other trends that existed outside of the Muslim community that had strong historical impact, such as the economic transformation of the Indies into part of the new capitalist economy arising in the West, the beginning of the transformation of elite Indonesian groups—the aristocracy and traditional administrators,—via Western education into an emerging national elite, and the work of Christian missionaries in entering some areas of the region to convert populations

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[39] Lathiful Khuluq, "K.H.M. Hasyim Asy'ari's Religious Thought and Political Activities (1871–1947)," M.A. thesis submitted to McGill University, 1997, 29.

[40] Benda, *Crescent*, 14; Berend ter Haar, *Adat Law in Indonesia*, trans. A. Arthur Schiller and E. Adamson Hoebel (New York, 1948), 74–77.

[41] Raden Adjeng Kartini, *Letters of a Javanese Princess* (New York, 1920), 20–21, 70–71, 215.

to that religion. A study of the first quarter of the century allows us to more properly place all these factors into context before beginning a proper study of the Persatuan Islam.

B. *Indonesia in the First Quarter of the Twentieth Century*

1. *Basic Political, Economic and Social Systems*

At the turn of the twentieth century the geographical area now known as Indonesia was operated as a colony of the Netherlands and was called the Netherlands East Indies. As such it was subject to the enactments of the Dutch legislature and directives of the government in the Hague, funneled principally through the Ministry of the Colonies. Major organization of the administration and overall policy were made in the Netherlands while secondary policy and organization were the responsibilities of the Netherlands East Indies administration located in Batavia, now the Indonesian city of Jakarta. The Administration was headed by a Governor General, appointed by the government in the Hague, and assisted by a staff of administrators in Batavia and by regional administrators located throughout the territories. In the years around 1900 several important policy decisions were made in the Hague and implemented in the Indies. These included a new financial arrangement whereby the Indies' and Dutch national budgets were separated and the Indies was responsible for its own expenses and revenue raising. This ended the practice of using "profits" from the Indies for the general use of the Dutch government; some 2,800,000,000 florins[42] from the forced labor agriculture policy in the mid-nineteenth century had been transferred to the Hague in this way. Further a decentralization of administrative regulation established a realigned system of provinces in the Indies and local government councils, which included some Indonesians in their partly-elected, partly-appointed composition.

In addition to this policy of decentralization, there was a statement from the Throne in 1902 in which the Dutch government stated its intention to upgrade the living conditions of the indigenous people of the Indies and laid out a concept of Dutch responsibility for their economic improvement and cultural betterment. With

[42] Antoine Cabaton, *Java, Sumatra and the Other Islands of the Netherlands Indies* (London, 1911), 208.

a regulation from the legislature passed in the same year this was the beginning of the so-called "Ethical Policy" in which an effort was begun to make amends for the harsh conditions and financial exploitation visited on the Javanese and Madurese peoples from the forced labor system mentioned above. One of the important historians of this era, E.S. De Klerck, writing in the 1930's, saw these policies as ushering in a new relationship between Dutch and Indonesians and as kindling a spirit that was to significantly change the colony over the next quarter of a century.[43] Agus Salim, a Muslim political activist mentioned earlier, describes this turn of the century era much differently, regarding it as oppressive and dedicated to making sure that the colonial system survived in a new fashion. Dutch expressions of a change in attitude to his way of thinking were merely that, voiced but hardly real in any significant fashion.[44]

The society of the Indies at the turn of the century was generally demarcated among three groups, described on racial and cultural grounds: European, Asian and Indonesian. The European group, consisting of about 90,000 people[45] in 1900 staffed the key positions of the governmental administration, manned the officer corps and about half of the other positions in the defense forces, and operated the key elements of the economy, such as plantations, processing plants, and the export businesses. They had full rights as Dutch citizens and considerable effort was taken to give them a lifestyle that accorded with middle class lifestyles that prevailed in Europe at the time. They had a very good public-education system supplied at public expense. The law codes in place for the Europeans paralleled the Dutch law system. When local and provincial government was initiated these Dutch citizens were allowed to elect members to deliberative councils and also received the bulk of the appointed seats. The second group, the Asian population, consisted of Arabs, Chinese and Indian groups, which constituted about 300,000 people in 1900.[46] Some were labor groups who worked on plantations and in the tin mines, mostly from the Indian and Chinese

[43] De Klerck, *History*, 470–480.

[44] Erni Haryanti Kahfi, "Haji Agus Salim: His Role in Nationalist Movements in Indoensia during the Early Twentieth Century," M.A. thesis presented to McGill University, 1996, 35–40.

[45] Cabaton, *Java*, 167.

[46] *Ibid.*, 154.

groups. Others were merchants serving as middlemen in consumer goods transfer, as money lenders to rural populations, and as small business owners in the indigenous economy. The Chinese group was most dynamic of the three and was able to establish its own educational system, at its own expense. The Arabs were highly regarded in the Muslim population because of their racial identity with the Prophet Muhammad, and, as noted above, even provided large numbers of teachers for local religious schools. All three groups were regulated under the civil code used for the Dutch and the criminal code designed for the Indonesian population. They were regarded as subjects of the Dutch government, but also as a part of the permanent immigrant group. The third group, the Indonesians, constituting the bulk of the population at approximately 35,000,000 people,[47] were regarded as Dutch subjects with ties to their land and communities that were both legal and cultural. As the forced labor system in the mid-nineteenth century indicates, their status was regarded as clearly inferior to that of the Europeans and earlier they had been treated as tropical serfs, bound to the land and liable for whatever crop taxes were placed on them. The Ethical Policy of the early twentieth century, while expecting to improve the status of the Indonesians, did not feature changing their ties to the land and culture; administrators saw them as remaining an agricultural population with a degree of autonomy, operating on the basis of village custom, under the control of an Indonesian official class, who would be trained by the Dutch and would cooperate closely with the Dutch. The model for this system came from the two existing Javanese principalities which had operated in a similar fashion during most of the colonial period of 300 years. Those principalities held small territories in Central Java with their seats of government at Yogyakarta and Solo respectively. As we shall see immediately below, the Dutch perception was outmoded almost immediately, as awakening political awareness among Indonesians led to discussions of "nation," "state," and "independence," that clearly transcended the concepts originally envisaged by the Dutch. By 1925 neither Dutch nor Indonesians were talking anymore about an idyllic agricultural community, but about a people with a much more complex mode of national existence.[48]

The creation of local councils in some parts of Java and Madura

[47] *Ibid.*, 26.
[48] De Klerck, *History*, II, 398.

in the early part of this century did include some carefully selected Indonesians as members. One British observer noted that the experiment was a success in that, while Europeans dominated the councils, there was cooperation and good will among members regardless of race.[49] In 1916 a Peoples' Council (*Volksraad*) was instituted, consisting of both elected and appointed members, with advisory powers and a role of reviewing the annual budget of the Indies. Dutch writers of the period regarded this new deliberative body as an important step in advancing toward a government in the Indies that was responsible to the peoples of the Indies. That may have reflected the mood among the Dutch sector of the population, who, after all, saw themselves as inheritors of the colonial system.[50] By that time, however, political activity among the Indonesians had advanced to a place in their demands for greater participation in government that a council with only advisory powers was regarded as inadequate. Indonesian activists of the period branded the council as ineffective and inadequate for the purposes of meeting growing political expectations in their sector of the population.[51] Many leading activists refused to take seats on the council and openly voiced "non-cooperation" with such institutions, often experiencing arrest and internal exile for expression of dissent viewed by Dutch officials as attempts to create political tension and unrest.

Economically the first quarter of the twentieth century was prosperous in the Indies. J.S. Furnivall, a leading specialist on colonial economies, observes that this was the period of investment capital and that old business patterns were giving way to the new system, which had the effect of expanding economic activity considerably. Economic activity was given a considerable boost with the opening of the Outer Islands to investment capital, while the general business of Java itself continued to operate at high volume. The standard cash crops—sugar, coffee, cacao and indigo remained important and to them were added the production of rubber, tin, petroleum and copra. Until the great world depression of the 1930's the European sector of the economy showed considerable profit from the worldwide business boom of the period.[52] Among the Indonesian businessmen on Java this was a period of considerable change and general

[49] Furnivall, *Netherlands Indies*, 286.
[50] Stibbe, *Neerlands Indië*, 65; De Klerck, *History*, II, 552–554.
[51] J.S. Furnivall, *Netherlands-Indië: A Study of a Plural Economy* (Cambridge, 1944), 272.
[52] De Klerck, *History*, II, 399; Furnivall, *Netherlands Indies*, 247–253.

economic prosperity as well. C. Dobbin, quoting an influential Dutch government inquiry in 1909, i.e., the Declining Prosperity Inquiry, states that during this particular period the cities of the Javanese interior—Bandung, Yogyakarta, Solo, Surabaya and others—saw a significant amount of business activity, particularly in cloth. She states that the Chinese and the Indonesian merchants were both quite active and for a time proved themselves capable of holding their own in the economy, but that in most places there were too many merchants for the general marketplace and the overall prosperity of this part of the economy faltered badly in some places in the late 1920's. She notes, as do others studying the era, that Muslim traders were the backbone of this entrepreneurial effort and that when they were prosperous they had money available for the promotion of Islam, as we noted.[53]

2. *The Growth and Direction of Education*

European education had been established in the nineteenth century and it had matured to a point that its graduates from the university-entrance track were generally accepted at universities in the Netherlands. Moreover, a series of schools had been created for the use of court officials and children of notables with government support, designed to train a class of officials for general use in the administration of the Indies. At the turn of the century, the Dutch decided to expand government support for education over to the general Indonesian sector as part of the effort to provide a greater measure of well-being for the population. Accordingly, a system of popular schools (*Volkscholen*) was inaugurated on Java and Madura. Consisting of three years of instruction, these school provided reading and writing Malay, arithmetic, basic science and local history. This school system was small in 1906 consisting of 367 schools, but had expanded by 1931 to 13,716 schools. Alongside the popular schools the Dutch also established some 400 higher-level vocational schools for specialization in "commerce, industry, agriculture, navigation, medical and veterinary service, pharmacy and railway and postal administration."[54] In addition, two local systems came into existence, the first being "Kartini" schools for girls, named for the

[53] Dobbin, "Business," 88–91.
[54] De Klerck, *History*, II, 418.

Javanese princess whose letters regarding modernization of Javanese society were published in Dutch and became popular reading in some Dutch circles early in the century. The second was the Taman Siswa schools begun at the end of the first quarter of the century. These were village schools designed to build on Javanese values and culture, while providing some access of standard learning in skill subjects, i.e. writing, reading and arithmetic.[55]

During this same era Muslim education began to undergo some change. The rural boarding school described above, continued to be the dominant institution, geared to learning Arabic and memorization of texts dealing with the various Islamic sciences, especially canonical law, theology and behavior. These schools prepared enough graduates to replenish the ranks of the teaching staffs of these schools, and also to allow some expansion of the system. Alongside this standard institution of Muslim education, however, there were some efforts to forge new kinds of Muslim schools, taking their cues from either the Middle East, the Chinese community or the Dutch themselves. K.A. Steenbrink maintains that the initial attempt at creating a new type of school was 1906 when the ruler of the Surakarta state established an advanced school at the court mosque to train religious scholars for service in his administration. At its founding the school had 14 teachers and 325 students. Emphasis was on traditional religious sciences, but they learned mathematics and science sufficient for discerning and calculating the necessary times for the fasting month and other religious requirements.[56] There were a considerable number of other schools established throughout the period that introduced textbooks, teaching techniques and learning philosophies that had not been used in the boarding schools. Mostly the experimenters were young men who had studied in the boarding schools themselves and then had finished their learning with one or more years of study at Makka and/or Cairo. Sumatra was the site of many of these schools, although some were situated on Java as well. Mahmud Yunus, Zainuddin Labai al-Janusi, Abdullah Achmad, and Hasjim Asj'ari were among those prominent in this effort.[57] In general it was an era of educational experimentation, rather than any start of

[55] M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (Bloomington, 1981), 149, 168.
[56] Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah* (Meppel, 1974), 33.
[57] Yunus, *Sejarah*, 117–118, 137–139, 146–148, 204–207.

a new system of education, although all the ingredients for the reformed system that did emerge in the following quarter of a century appeared during this period under discussion. Amidst the experimentation there were two efforts that moved toward establishing new systems, even though their impact was relatively limited at the time. The first was the Madrasah Diniah/Thawalib in West Sumatra and the other was sponsored by the Jamiyya Chairiya (Benevolent Society) and Al-Irsyad organization—both Arab associations—at Batavia and other major cities on Java and at Palembang on Sumatra. The West Sumatran developments looked to Egypt in particular, while the development on Java looked to the Chinese community and the Dutch for inspiration. Both systems regarded Arabic and religious sciences as continuing to be important, but placed considerable limitation on them for the introduction of general subject matter and the mastery of other languages, particularly Indonesian. In the Madrasah Diniah/Thawalib system textbooks for the beginning classes were written by the chief organizer of the system, Zainuddin Labai al-Junusi, while the texts for the middle level were Indonesian translations of Egyptian textbooks, and the more senior level used Arabic textbooks with a selection of classical and modern texts by Middle Eastern authors.[58] In the Al-Irsyad schools many textbooks were locally prepared including some on religious sciences, particularly by Ahmad Surkati, but some were taken from the Middle East from both classical and modern writers. In this system the initial model was the Chinese community schools in Indonesia, which were viewed as highly successful in training young Chinese men for the world of business, which was the field of endeavor for the Arabs who supported the Jamiyya Chairiya and Al-Irsyad organization schools.[59] Both the West Sumatran and Javanese systems were limited in number of schools—less than ten schools in either case,—in numbers of students—only hundreds of students during this era,—and in total amount of education—elementary training in both cases. Further, the effort on Java was limited to the Arab community and did not seek to expand among the Indonesian ethnic groups. However, the impact of these two systems was considerable in the wider Muslim community as it came to develop an alternative to the boarding

[58] *Ibid.*, 66–67.
[59] Natalie Mobini-Kescheh, *The Hadrami Awakening* (Ithaca, 1999), 79–84.

school on one side and to the Dutch educational system on the other during the second and third quarters of the twentieth century.

Education in general underwent such a rapid development, particularly with the founding of a large number of private schools, that the People's Council passed an ordinance in 1923 setting standards regarding government employment that excluded graduates from schools not receiving subsidies from the government. This produced a predictable reaction among those not recognized, but in general did little to stop the founding and expansion of such schools, although it did create difficulty for those seeking employment in government and in the Westernized sector of the economy.[60]

3. *Changing Attitudes toward Islam and Its Institutions*

Attitudes among believers regarding Islam received new impetus about the turn of the century and shortly thereafter when pilgrims and students returning from the Middle East initiated a fresh wave of enthusiasm. It appears that there were a host of viewpoints concerning Islam in the Middle East during this time frame and students and pilgrims brought back a variety of those views to Indonesia as a result; this was to remain true all the way into the 1930's. The views included new thinking in jurisprudence, especially regarded the matter of fresh interpretation (*ijtihād*), renewed interest in the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet, revived interest in a cross-national Islamic community generally referred to in the West as Pan-Islamism, alongside continued attention to Sunnī teaching on doctrine, legal studies, and mysticism that had marked the general learning in Islam for several centuries. Returning Indonesian students from the Middle East showed this diverse influence. Hasjim Asyari, later the leader of the Nadhlatul Ulama, studying in Makka near the turn of the century, regarded language reform as essential, whereby the meaning of Arabic was to be as important as learning its forms for reading and recitation; he saw no reason to change orientations toward long-held teachings of Ashʿarite doctrine and Shāfiʿī jurisprudence.[61] Mahmud Yunus, later important in education in the late colonial and early independence eras, received encouragement at Cairo in the 1920s for preparing an Indonesian commentary on the *Qurʾān*; earlier he had faced

[60] Furnivall, *Netherlands Indies*, 378.
[61] Khuluq, "Hasjim Asyʿari," 28–29.

considerable opposition from traditionalist scholars in Minangkabau for his use of Malay/Indonesia in explaining the *Qur'ān*.[62] Agus Salim learned much about Muslim political thinking from his sojourn in Jiddah as a member of the Dutch consul's staff from 1906 to 1911.[63] Further iteration of names of Indonesians in the Middle East at this time would show further configurations of knowledge and insight that they gained and transmitted to the Indonesian region in this period of time. It is important to understand that the observations and insights regarding the religious teachings of the time were not singular, nor was there total agreement by observers, rather, observations were particularistic, with different peoples having special understandings that they tried to apply in the Indonesian setting.

Among those returning with new enthusiasm was a sizeable group that were impressed with the teachings of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad 'Abduh who advocated Pan-Islamism and Islamic Modernism. The thinking of these two "reformers" maintained that "return to the teachings of *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*" would revitalize Islam and that Muslims from all nations should unite in a single religio-political community.[64] This set of teachings came to be known as Islamic modernism and was spread to nearly every corner of the Muslim world over a period of a twenty-five years through periodicals and returning pilgrims. The Dutch, and indeed most colonial nations, saw these modernist Muslim principles as antithetical to their own interests and attempted to keep such influence from penetrating the territories they controlled. Books and pamphlets advocating these ideas were banned for some time, though Dutch control over their entry was far from complete, particularly as the materials were not kept out of Singapore immediately to the north. So, in addition to returning pilgrims and students studying in the central Islamic world those ideas came in through Singapore, where the Arabic message was translated into Malay-language publications which found their way into Indonesian hands.[65]

Modernist Muslim thought first arrived in Indonesia through the influence of several Indonesian Muslim teachers resident in Makkah who taught many of the Indonesian students studying there. They

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[62] Howard M. Federspiel, *Popular Indonesian Literature of the Qur'ān* (Ithaca, 1994), 12.
[63] Kahfi, "Agus Salim," 20–24.
[64] Wilfred C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History (Princeton, 1957)*, 54–58, 62–63.
[65] Ricklefs, *Indonesia*, 160–162.

laid particular stress on the importance of the principles of jurisprudence in studying the *Qur'ān* and the record of the Prophet Muḥammad's words and action, known as *Ḥadīth.* Ahmad al-Khatib, from the Minangkabau area of Sumatra, was perhaps the most influential; through his own writings and the activity of several of his students, particularly Hadji Rasul and Ahmad Taher, his ideas gained considerable following in Southeast Asia. These missionaries for Islamic Modernism de-emphasized the pan-Islamic context that was an important part of al-Afghānī's preaching, and concentrated on the issue of purifying religious ritual from outside influences, an approach which led to reluctant Dutch willingness to allow these reformers to undertake their activities. Consequently, the modernists attacked those aspects of mysticism which they regarded as excessive and non-Islamic, certain practices in ritual worship they believed to be accretions to orthodox practice, and the schools of jurisprudence as the final authority in matters of Muslim behavior (*taqlīd*). This modernist activity was vehemently opposed by traditional religious scholars—many of them had studied in Makkah as well but had not accepted the reformist notions advocated by Khatib and others,—who regarded the modernists as emasculating Islamic teachings by de-emphasizing the interpretations of classical and medieval theologians and jurists. The traditionalists' response stated that the subservient political and social position of the Muslims throughout the world was caused by Muslim failure to follow the prescriptions of Islam as laid down by the four schools of jurisprudence.[66] The dispute between the modernists and traditionalists had no early resolution; as modernist ideas gradually spread throughout Indonesia during the first quarter of the twentieth century, the struggle between the two groups continued in every region. Moreover the dispute often took on nasty overtones, going so far as declaring followers of the opposing faction "heretics" and refusing them burial in cemeteries.

It is not altogether clear why there should have been so much interest in religious reform at this particular time. In large part it seems that it was the particular vehicles it used that were important, for it expressed itself through the growing educational system, through the new mass Muslim associations, through the political

[66] Hamka, *Ayahku* (Jakarta, 1958), 46–47, 76–84; Fred R. Von der Mehden, *Religion and Nationalism in Southeast Asia* (Madison, 1963), 172; G.H. Bousquet, *Introduction a l'etude de l'Islam indonesien* (Paris, 1938), 162–164.

activity of the day and through the expansion of a press, particularly in the Malay and Indonesian language. Why it became important in the first place, however, is more difficult to ascertain, other than to say that it followed tendencies in Islam elsewhere.[67] But the Indonesian scene had its own dynamic and the rise of revitalized religious concern here became important in ways that were not necessarily evident elsewhere, as we shall see throughout this book.

Several significant Islamic associations were founded in Indonesia during the early part of the twentieth century that represent this intensification of Muslim feeling. Of them, two were in existence before 1925: the Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad, while others came into existence later. Of these the Muhammadiyah has been the longest-lived of these associations and is still prominent in the Indonesian Muslim community at the time of this writing. Founded by Ahmad Dachlan in 1912 it first concentrated on education and social welfare activities in the central Java region before becoming more widespread in the 1920's and 1930's.[68] Al-Irsyad, founded in 1915 with Ahmad Surkati as one of its leading teachers, was limited to the Arab community, and was important until the 1950's when its mission was made largely irrelevant by developments in the Arab community itself which began its integration into the larger Indonesian society.[69]

These associations, along with several others that were founded later, became the backbone of the Muslim movement and served as important loci for Muslim activity throughout the twentieth century. They offered institutions through which general problems facing the Muslim community could be considered and addressed. They offered a means of mobilization of large numbers of Muslims with similar outlooks and allowed them to formulate religious outlooks and methods of expressing themselves. They offered a safe haven for Muslims who wished to escape the political rigors of the times, and group solidarity in fashioning approaches that still allowed them to be active in non-political ways for the improvement of the country. They also

[67] John O. Voll, *Islam, Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder, 1982), 149–157.

[68] J. Petrus Blumberger, *De Nationalistische Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Haarlem, 1987), 90–93; 'Abdu-l Mu'ti Ali, "The Mochammadijah Movement: A Bibliographical Introduction," M.A. thesis presented to McGill University, 1957, 28–42.

[69] *Ensiklopedi Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta, 1992), 437–438.

offered a place for considering the political message and as a place of religious consideration of the political choices confronting believers, regardless of the age in which those political choices were manifest. Finally these associations became training grounds for leadership, since they were organized on a series of levels, with opportunities for some to function at both local and cross-organizational levels of administration and leadership. It is a monument to their durability that many of these associations are still existing today, over three-quarters of a century later, many with their original missions intact, even if their approaches are more developed and their membership much more aware of the implications, whether societal or political, of what they are after.

4. *The Political Arena*

Political activity had, of course, always functioned in the Indies, both in the Dutch Administration and in the Indonesian principalities, although its form was often in form of cliques and informal cabals and had no organizational form. The differences between C. Snouck Hurgronje and J.B. Van Heutz in the last part of the century concerning policy toward Muslims, where the former wanted to use a combination of "carrot and strick" tactics, while the latter saw coercion as the better strategy, is an example of such politics at work in the colonial administration.[70] In the first quarter of the twentieth century, however, the rise of political organizations and mass organizations energized the Indonesian population and created a new set of conditions in which the Netherlands Indies Administration was to function. This new political arena was partially designed and used by Muslims, but was not exclusive to them either in its origins or application. Some inspiration came from political organizations in Europe, carried to the Indies through Dutch immigration; the leftist movement seems to have started in this fashion, recruiting initially in the European community but later in the Indonesian community as well. Nationalist organizations seemed to have been the product of students studying in the Netherlands, some of whom were active in Dutch party politics during their periods of study. Others seem more indigenous, such as the famed Budi Utomo (High Endeavor) association, founded in 1908 and often referred to as marking the

[70] Vlekke, *Nusantara*, 326–330.

advent of the nationalist era in Indonesian history. Much the same is true of the Sarekat Islam (Islamic Association), the first vehicle for nationalism founded in 1912; it had its origins in a trade organization of Muslim merchants who sought to organize a boycott against Chinese firms and their products, also in 1908.[71]

In the Sarekat Islam most views, whether right, left or center, found a platform for their consideration and their use in fostering a spirit in the population dedicated to the creation of an independent Indonesian nation. Much of the political leadership of the party subscribed to modernist Muslim principles, but at the high point of its activity in the years between 1914 and 1926 the organization had the participation of communists, nationalists and Muslim activists, all working against a continuation of Dutch rule. Most importantly the organization was a lesson in formulation of political thinking and the discussions held in party councils and other forums allowed the various factions to develop cogent political philosophies that were to find their place in all sectors of the nationalist movement until 1945 and afterwards in the formation of the Indonesian state itself. Accordingly, the factions debated the relationship between socialism and Islam and thereby began a process of defining Islamic and nationalist political ideals that has not ceased until the current day. Also the factions discussed the methods that were appropriate to use in the struggle to gain recognition from the Dutch and ultimate independence. Actually those factions used a large number of such strategies: accommodation at times, non-cooperation at others, violence in a few instances, and heavy criticism of authorities in still other situations.[72]

Although drawing considerable support from the population and able to gain the attention of the Dutch colonial officials, the Sarekat Islam ultimately lost its vitality through inter-nicene struggles of various groups—inter alia, secularists versus religious factions, accommodationists versus proponents of militant action,—and fell apart during the mid- and late1920's when one section of the party moved, through work stoppages, to force concessions from the colonial administration. Arrests and exile of leaders, plus internal party purging left the Sarekat Islam much less than it had been earlier and its leadership of the independence struggle was assumed by other, smaller organizations with more clearly expressed nationalist goals. The down-

[71] Von der Mehden, *Religion and Nationalism*, 74–80.
[72] *Ibid.*, 74–76; Furnivall, *Netherlands Indies*, 249–250; De Klerk, *History*, II, 545–548.

fall of the Sarekat Islam in the 1920's was due to the many differences among its members on all sorts of problems; although the immediate cause was the leadership's failure to resolve the differences between religion on the one hand and nationalism and Communism on the other. These differences led to a fragmentation of the association in 1925, and consequently marked the beginning of secular nationalism and Muslim nationalism along completely separate lines. Like the traditionalist-modernist Muslims split, this development also had serious implications for the development of Islam in Indonesia and has been a focal point of Muslim interest until the present. But this came after 1925 and up until that time the political activity of the era belonged clearly to the Sarekat Islam, which changed the political landscape and gave the Indonesian activists a platform from which to create a new political discussion based on the concept of ultimate dissociation of Dutch rule and the Indonesian population. The concept of the umbrella political organization operated by Muslims in the name of Islam, to which wide groups of Indonesians expressing a wide variety of opinions could belong, has been a continuing theme among Indonesian Muslim intellectuals. Looking backward from later times in the twentieth century, Muslim intellectuals liked what they saw and often expressed hopes for another use of the model.[73]

C. *Introducing the Persatuan Islam*

With this background in place it is now appropriate to move over to the actual subject of this book, a study of the religious movement named the Persatuan Islam. As we shall see in the ensuing discussion the movement shows very clearly the points of analysis raised above. It sprang from the ranks of Muslim merchants, one of its founders was an Arabo-Indian family that came down the trade routes to Southeast Asia, it espoused doctrines that came via the "lifeline" to Southeast Asia and it challenged the closed culture of Southeast Asia for a regeneration of Islamic thinking and behavior. The movement was committed to a modernist view of Islam, although its interpretation of those modernist principles gave it a particularist outlook that was not always in harmony with other proponents of Islamic modernism operating in Indonesia.

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[73] Howard M. Federspiel, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Intellectuals and National Development* (Commack, NY 1998), 198.

This study will outline the Persatuan Islam's view toward the various problems confronting Islam in Indonesia during the twentieth century, indicate how these views differed from those of other Indonesian Muslims, and examine the effect of these views in its educational activity, its political viewpoint and its relations with other Muslim and non-Muslim groups. Today, at the turn of the twenty-first century, the Persatuan Islam is a small educational and religious community with small numbers of followers throughout Indonesia and Malaysia, largely viewed as intense believers in Islamic piety and righteous behavior. Its members are not involved in the great debates of the political and social issues of the day. But sixty years ago the organization was important in just such a role. Through the forcefulness of several of its leading members it projected important views about the issues of the day and voiced them in the leading forums of the time, sometimes giving direction, at other times calling for revision of the thinking of the majority. Importantly, its works on Islamic law and the translation of the *Qur'ān* made in the eras when it as regarded as influential, are still highly regarded highly today. Among scholars its contributions to the development of Islam within the Indonesian nation are regarded as substantial and influential.

This study centers on two periods of time, i.e., the late colonial era (1925 to 1942) and the period of liberal democracy (1950 to 1959). These are the periods of formative activity for the Persatuan Islam when they made a mark on the Indonesian Islamic community, on the politics of the day and interrelationships between Muslims and members of other community. The activity after these two time periods took on a different dimension and, while meaningful at the regional level, the organization no longer had the same national impact that it had earlier. Consequently, the study will concentrate on those two eras, but will include some brief remarks about the later activities.

The value of a study of the Perstuan Islam lies in the insight it affords into the early development of Indonesian Islam in the twentieth century, and reveals how the the trend toward standard Islam that has been such a part of twentieth-century life in Indonesia came into being. It offers an opportunity to revisit an earlier time and to understand the thinking of that era by a group of committed Muslims in regard to the situation they faced. It becomes, then, part of the scholarly inheritance of Indonesian Islam and helps us understand the legacy of "standard" Islam it helped establish in the operation of the Indonesian Muslim community.

PART TWO

THE PERSATUAN ISLAM IN LATE COLONIAL INDONESIA (1923 TO 1942)

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INTRODUCTION

A. *The Importance of Defining and Identifying*

In 1933 Sabirin, an editor of the magazine published by the Persatuan Islam, who was also at the same time a secondary leader of the Muslim political organization, Sarekat Islam, addressed the conflict that existed between "Muslim political activists" and "nationalist political activists" by illustrating the importance of religious commands and prohibitions. In the article Sabirin was clearly addressing Muslims who were pondering the question; he certainly was not answering the nationalist group, except incidentally. In his remarks, he stated that for Muslim groups "it is necessary to pray five times a day, forbidden to be in the company of a woman who is not a close relative, necessary to fast during the month of Ramadan, forbidden to honor "homeland" and flag, necessary to fast, forbidden to employ usury, necessary to go on the pilgrimage, forbidden to follow a nationalist cause, necessary to promote religion, and forbidden to use strong drink and to gamble."[1] He noted that Muslim activists accepted this code as an identification with Islam, while the nationalist activists did not place any such religious principles upon themselves. At the time he wrote it Sabirin's list was probably reflective of mainstream thinking between the two groups, so the question can be posed as to why Sabirin went to the trouble to raise the issue and make pointed reference to this list of "do's" and "don't's." The answer is two-fold: he was interested in giving firm Muslim identification to his own group and show its discipline and dedication to Islamic principles; and he suggested that the nationalist activists, because they eschewed this Muslim identification, were somehow short of the mark and were not good choices as leaders for Muslims who might otherwise be attracted by some of the nationalists' political statements. There are numerous other examples of this same approach, as we shall see in the following several chapters. It was Islamic identification more than anything else that took up the time of the Persatuan Islam

[1] *Pembela Islam* 58 (1933), 8.

in the first twenty years of the organization's existence, that is, until the end of the Dutch era in 1942.

In fact, throughout the time frame from 1908 to 1942, known generally as the nationalist era, Indonesian society underwent momentous and rapid change so that identification was a constant problem. Whose standards were to be used—those of the Dutch, the old Indonesian ruling class, those of the customary rural communities, those of the Indonesian nationalist groups, or those of the new Indonesian elites that were rising to prominence? Definition and identification became important tasks for political activists to address. The nationalist leader Sukarno certainly achieved this at key moments—as he did when he identified "Marhaenisme" as a political concept that defined the Indonesian "everyman," or as he did later in the formulation of the *Pancasila* (Five Principles), which began the definition of Indonesian national identity. The Youth Congresses in the 1930's contributed to definition with its "youth pledge," as well as adopting a "national anthem" and verifying a trend already emerging in society itself that Indonesian/Malay was the formal language of the nationalist movement. On the Muslim side similar defining took place, as was the case in the Sarekat Islam around 1915 when Abdul Muis differentiated between Marxian socialism and Islamic social responsibilities. In the same way the Muhammadiyah association did much to build a concept of a concerned Muslim "society," that gave contemporary meaning to the idea of Islamic community in Indonesian life. The Persatuan Islam, as we shall discover in this first part of the study, was especially good at creating an Islamic ethos and at defining Islamic principles in clear terms. Other Muslim groups did this as well, usually in combination with other activities—usually educational,—it is only that the Persatuan Islam made this activity its *raison d'être.*

Most of the definition put forward by the Persatuan Islam was common coinage among Muslim activists in the preceding decade and the Persatuan Islam was hardly original about any of its major viewpoints on nationalism, Islamic modernism, its views on Christianity or its judgment of the Ahmadiyah movement; these views were already generally set before the Persatuan Islam came on the scene. But Persatuan Islam activists certainly refined the message and gave each issue some accompanying justification and doctrine that made the issue much more focused that it had been before and laid out

the Muslim principles clearly in all cases. Most of the effort of the organization was spent in such activity, i.e., defining and justifying the positions it espoused. While, eventually, Indonesian nationalism and Indonesian Islam did not follow the Persatuan Islam's definition of things for the new nation that arose, other parts were taken over intact. But it was the defining that was important, because as the members of the Persatuan Islam defined, it also forced others to define as well, and this was to play a certain beneficial, if also irksome, role in assisting the entire Indonesian community.

In this respect the effort serves as an important arena for the study of the clash of ideas during the nationalist era, since the Persatuan Islam was activist and moved to debate differences between its position and those of the other actors in the arena during the era. We shall see below that this was done in various ways, most of which were dramatic and effective, allowing differentiation to take place. This was an important contribution, even it not always enjoyed by those who had to face up to such scrutiny and attack, and was regarded by those groups who wanted cooperation and unity among Muslim groups as contributing to a divisiveness.

This section will also show some of the dynamics of nationalist program-building and conceptualization. B. Anderson and others correctly note the significance of the the rise of Indonesian nationalist development during the era, but largely (and probably wisely) avoid the struggle that went on within the movement itself to give nationalism real definition. This study, much like those of F. Von der Mehden[2] and G.F. Pijper[3] can serve as a micro-study for those dynamics and add to the particular way in which religion, especially Islam, made itself felt in the development of Indonesian nationalism. Writing in 1999 and looking backward, it is apparent that the nationalist ideology has long been subject to the difficulty of how Islam and national ideals were to interact. As several studies have shown, the interaction has shown great flux over the past three quarters of a century, but the dynamic continues even today, as the place of Muslim intellectual activity throughout that long period indicates.

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[2] Von der Mehden, *Religion.*
[3] Pijper, *Studiën.*

B. *Concerning the Discussion in the Chapters Composing Part II*

The following three chapters provide an anaysis for an understanding of Persatuan Islam activity during the late colonial period. Chapter 2 deals with context, that is, the political, social and religious environment that existed during the period as the major current happenings of the time. This sets the stage for a discussion of the formation, activities and interests of the Persatuan Islam itself in Chapter 3. The discussion in that chapter is meant to build on and relate to the material contained in the previous chapter. Chapter 4 outlines the major thinking and justifications put forward by association activists that prompted them to undertake the activities that they did.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONTEXT OF DUTCH, INDONESIAN AND MUSLIM SOCIETIES

A. *The Dynamics of Government and Society*

During this period of time Dutch political control continued over the East Indian archipelago, with essentially the same form of governance that was developed in the first quarter of the century. A governor-general appointed by the Dutch government in the Hague was responsible for the administration of the territory. There were five governors-general during this period.[1] According to the Act of Authority of 1933 this official was given both legislative and executive authority, but he was required to consult with an advisory council on certain matters. That council, called the People's Council, had half of its members drawn from the Indonesian population, with appointed Dutch members constituting nearly the same number. The council assumed more visibility during the period than it had earlier and became a place of debate on important issues, but it gained prestige since the governor-general was obligated to consult it on many matters before issuing legislation or finalizing the government budget. E.S. De Klerk termed the People's Council "co-parliamentary," since it advised the governor-general who had the real legislative power vested in his office.[2] Many people, Europeans resident in Indonesia and Indonesians, would have preferred real legislative power for the People's Council, and there were voices raised throughout the era with this end in mind. Political analysts and former administrators for the most part did not like the arrangement, as limiting the governor general and allowing people who would never assume responsibility for enforcing legislation undue criticism of pending enactments.[3]

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[1] The Governors-General were: D. Fock (1921–1926), A.C.D. de Graeff (1926–1931), D.C. de Jonge (1931–1936), A.W.C. Tjarda van Starkenburgh Stackouwer (1936–1940) and J.H. van Mook (1941–19–).

[2] De Klerck, *History* II, 558–560.

[3] *Ibid.*, 558; Bousquet, *French*, 77–81.

A general aim of Dutch policy was that the welfare of the native population was to be improved, a doctrine that dated to the Ethical Policy era, and this was reasserted in official documents in the early 1930's. To that end a place in the economy was reserved for Indonesian entrepreneurs, the numbers of schools and the programs of education were expanded, and improved transportation, communications, and health facilities were increased in the countryside. Advisory councils were put in place in the 1930s at provincial, regency, urban and rural levels. In 1932, near the beginning of the process, some 1583 councillors were chosen, about half of them Indonesians; the numbers of councils and councillors increased during the decade. Health and communication systems were extended throughout the country and by 1940 about 6 million people out of 60 million were considered to be literate, which was a considerable gain over figures from the turn of the century. For example, in 1900 only 125,000 children were in indigenous schools and 21,280 were in Dutch schools, but by 1928 1,513,000 were in indigenous schools and 134,724 were in Dutch schools.[4] In economics, by 1940 production of pepper and maize as well as the manufacture of cigarettes was completely in the hands of Indonesians. Much of the changeover was financed by the introduction of bank loans underwritten by the government, so that at the start of Indonesianization in 1931 there were 500 loans given, but by 1938, when the process was fully underway 25,000 loans were extant. Consequently, foreign capital accounted for 69% of the business activity in 1930, but by 1940 that figure was down to nearly 50%, indicating that the share by local entrepreneurs had increased significantly.[5] The French scholar G.H. Bousquet, in his comparison of the Dutch and French experiences in regulating colonies, expressed considerable respect for the efforts of the Dutch administrators in accomplishing this task.[6]

At the same time the economy of the era was marred by the world-wide economic depression beginning in 1929 and lasting throughout much of the 1930s. B.H.M. Vlekke shows the serious consequences for the Indies where the value of exports, composed almost entirely of raw materials used in manufacturing or processing industries, dropped sharply between the late 1920's and the early 1930s.

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[4] Amry Vandenbosch, *The Dutch East Indies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1942), 201.
[5] Vlekke, *Nusantara*, 364; Furnivall, *East*, 286.
[6] Bousquet, *French*, 116–117.

In 1928 the Indies government had a surplus of 54 million guilders from its share of exports, while in 1932 it had a loss of 9 million guilders. This represented a trade loss of about 25%[7] over those years. Individual producers and companies, whether Dutch or indigenous, were hit correspondingly hard and it was not until the later part of the 1930s that the economy began to recover.

Socially the East Indies continued to be divided into several societies. The European sector of the population was growing rapidly and reached 242,000 in 1940; Europeans dominated life in the major cities of Java, in north Sumatra and in the southern Celebes. As in the previous era the system of governance served Europeans as the primary clients and the economy, despite attempts to give Indonesians an improved place in it, was structured to their benefit. This sector pushed politically for a greater voice in politics and saw itself as the heir-apparent to any system that would devolve political authority on the population of the Indies; they would be the elite by definition. The Asian sector of the population—Chinese, Arabs and Indians—continued to act as intermediary businessmen between the Dutch and Indonesian peoples, although their economic position was threatened for a time by the arrival of 7,000 well-financed Japanese. In the Chinese and Arab societies considerable generational turmoil was occurring as education and awareness of conditions in their home countries affected the views of the younger generation. There was debate whether their loyalties rested with their place of residence or with the countries of their racial origin. The issue was not to be resolved within the period, but there was considerable organizational activity generated as a result of the restlessness. The Indonesian sector of the population was still divided between the princely rulers and the official class on one side, who had considerably more benefits than the large agricultural populations on the other. While the representation for the officials was reasonably good—most of the members of the People's Council and other councils came from this class—they too had desires for an even greater voice in government, but usually sided with Dutch policy, for they saw themselves as an indigenous elite, which might be ill served if change destroyed their positions. The large agricultural community remained mostly illiterate and at the bottom of the economic system with modernization

[7] Vlekke, *Nusantara* 361.

affecting them least of all, even though there was considerable attention by government to their production of staples and export crops. The small, but growing urban populations had little voice in government and were alternately apathetic or resentful of this powerless position. J. Frederick's study of Surabaya relates how the urban population saw conditions as vastly unsuited for a rising middle class, since they were confined to "native quarters" with limited area and facilities, while the Europeans developed the remainder of the cities for their own residential, commercial and governmental purposes without much thought about impact of their behavior on the Indonesian urban population.[8] He notes, however, that education and modernization were expanding opportunities for educated Indonesians and giving them better social position. Together, the two factors led to considerable frustration.

The governors-general of this period were convinced that "order and peace" was necessary, even at high social costs, and considerable effort was given to keeping Indonesian nationalist activities under close scrutiny. Potential threats to public order were summarily handled, usually with imprisonment, often without trial. It had been the labor unrest of 1926 and 1927—an aftermath of the communist actions in the previous decade—that had convinced the authorities to act with such force. At that time 13,000 people were arrested, 4,500 were sent to prison and 1,300 were sent off to New Guinea. Boven Digul on the Western coast of New Guinea soon gained a reputation for being the most arduous prison camp because of its hostile climate, the malarial sicknesses that raged there, and the stern rule of the prison authorities. Indonesian students studying in the Netherlands, who often engaged freely in political activities in that country, became suspect when they returned to Indonesia. Anyone upsetting the Dutch Administration's conceptions of order were reprimanded, jailed or given internal exile. One litmus test applied by Colonial authorities toward Indonesian activists was the degree of cooperation they showed toward the Dutch administration, with those refusing seats on local advisory councils and the People's Council frequently ending up in confinement. The key event in this drama was the 1929 trial of Sukarno, a leader of the new nationalist faction, who was found

[8] William H. Frederick, *Visions and Heat: The Making of the Indonesian Revolution* (Athens, Ohio, 1989), 20–28.

guilty of planning civil unrest and sentenced to prison. Later he was sent into internal exile, initially in the Flores and later at Bencolen. He was followed into exile by many other activists.

B. *The Political Arena*

1. *The Dutch-Indonesian Struggle*

The People's Council served as one important arena where the drama of the Dutch-Indonesian struggle had its most visible form. The vital issue marking that struggle was the discussion of resolutions for self-rule, autonomy and independence that were introduced, usually by the Indonesians. At times other issues were debated where Government policies were challenged for harming the interests of the Indonesians, as was the case in the Unregulated Schools Ordinance of 1932. Both of these issues need some amplification.

Concerning political devolution, there was an implicit recognition that the East Indies was being prepared for self-government later, but there was no date set for this to happen, or any policy specifically to prepare the population or an elite for that event. Several unofficial proposals were put forward by individuals from the Dutch side, such as the Colijn Plan,[9] circa 1928, which featured semi-autonomous Indonesians states in a federal system that would be operated at the federal level by Dutch authority with an advisory assembly, something like the People's Council. The plan was an early version of the United States of Indonesia concept that the Dutch returned to in the 1940's as a means of reasserting their authority after the Japanese period. About the same time a liberal organization in the Netherlands advocated an Indian "commonweal" in which an autonomous Indonesian state would be joined in perpetual union with the Netherlands.[10] Among Indonesians thinking on the subject grew bolder throughout the era. In 1929 the Indonesian nationalists in the People's Council formed a coalition with the goal of seeking early autonomy for Indonesia and the following year announced that complete independence from the Netherlands had become the coalition's goal.[11] In 1936 the Subarjo Resolution was introduced into the People's

[9] Bousquet, *French*, 73–75.
[10] Vandenbosch, *East*, 356–357.
[11] *Ibid.*, 357.

Council by the civil servants' organization, which called for an autonomous Indonesia within the Dutch Empire. In 1939 and 1940 the first and second All-Indonesia congresses—meetings of important Indonesian political activists representing their political parties and mass organizations—met and issued resolutions calling for the People's Council to become a parliament with appropriate powers, for official policy to recognize that the territory would become self-governing, and to make preparation for securing that goal. The issue was raised in the People's Council, but the Governor-General sidestepped the issue by appointing a commission to look into the matter. In 1941 Queen Wilhelmina, heading a government-in-exile in Great Britain, since the Netherlands itself had been occupied by the Germans, stated that after the war arrangements would be made to give self-government to the Indies, without specifying whether Europeans or Indonesians would be the major beneficiaries of that move. Dutch intransigence on the issue produced widespread dissatisfaction on the part of the Indonesian elite, and to a degree in the general population, so that the Japanese were viewed at that moment as a better alternative than the Dutch in gaining nationalist goals.[12]

Regarding the second issue, the Unregulated Schools Ordinance was introduced by the Colonial Administration in 1932 to give the government some control over the creation and operation of private schools which did not receive government subsidy. Legislation earlier in the century had attempted to limit the job opportunities of graduates of such schools, by giving government jobs only to those from authorized schools. The 1932 ordinance had a different purpose and was connected to peace and order policies. Specifically the ordinance was a response to the creation of the Taman Siswa schools, which were privately created and designed to provide education useful for the villages of Java, stressing Javanese values and Indonesian nationalism. Since these schools did not receive government subsidies and were not beholden to follow government regulations under the law as it then stood, they introduced unabashed teaching about nationalism into their curriculum. The new ordinance was a response to such a move and was designed to open all schools to government scrutiny through licensing, which would allow action to be taken for teaching

[12] Susan Abeyasekere, *One Hand Clapping: Indonesian Nationalism and the Dutch 1939–1942* (Canberra, 1976), 24–31.

found offensive by government inspectors. The ordinance covered all private schools, including the Muslim boarding schools, so there was an outcry from all quarters of the Indonesian camp and the government faced severe criticism of its policies in the press and in the People's Council. After debates in the People's Council, the government decided to alter its policy, although the revised ordinance still gave the government some rights of inspection and regulation.[13]

2. *Nationalists versus Muslims*

A second political arena was found in the nationalist movement itself, where several groups contended for leadership of the movement. Numerous organizations came into existence at this time, but actually two ideological camps transcended the organizations, with the established Islamic organizations challenged by new nationalist personalities who differed profoundly from the Muslim group in their outlook, tactics and strategy. The failure of the Islamic movement to achieve any real gains in the period from 1910 to 1927 when mass organization of the population under an Islamic banner had been tried, and the very unsuccessful labor actions of 1927 by a part of the organization raised serious questions about their efficacy. The challenge came in the mid and late 1920's from a group of activists who had attended Dutch schools, some in the Indies and some in the Netherlands itself.[14] These Dutch-trained students, turned activist, were impressed with the West's technical progress, its ideals of personal liberty and by socialist concepts of economic justice then under considerable discussion in European schools. Having only a superficial religious training for the most part, these students tended to view religion—specifically Islam—as tied to the past, incapable of providing answers to modern problems, and at least partly responsible for Indonesia's 300 year position as a colony. They came to believe that the best way to achieve independence and build a strong Indonesian state was to follow the secular trend of the West and confine religion to the areas of individual belief and worship. They called for an Indonesian nation-state that drew its inspiration from pre-Islamic cultures, particularly those on Java. Majapahit in Eastern

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[13] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra (1927–1933)* (Ithaca, 1971), 216–221; Ricklefs, *History*, 180.

[14] L. Sitorus, *Sedjarah Pergerakan Kebangsaan Indonesia* (Jakarta, 1951), 34–39.

Java and Srivijaya at Palembang in southern Sumatra became their two greatest inspirations. In this conception, nationalism was presented as the movement which was to usher in a new Indonesia reflecting the glories of those past empires.[15] They regarded their goal as independence for all native peoples of the archipelago regardless of ethnic identity, customs, or religion and attempted to use nationalism as the common thread, a move that bothered many purist Muslims, particularly those activists associated with the Sarekat Islam. But the nationalist move was timely and attracted those disillusioned with the inability of the Sarekat Islam to deliver political gain for the native population.

The nationalist movements started with the formation of numerous study clubs, mainly in the major cities of Java about 1923. By 1925 they were cooperating with one another for purposes of promoting "Indonesian unity", which moved beyond a simple ethnic identification that had been prevalent earlier over to a wider Indonesian identity.[16] In 1927 the Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Nationalist Party) then under a slightly different name, was founded, which called for Indonesian unity, identified Malay as the language of the movement and introduced a national song, called "Great Indonesia" (Indonesia Raya), which remains the national anthem of the Indonesian state even in the early 21st century. Only about 6,000 belonged to the party in 1928, far less than the Sarekat Islam in its heyday, but the revolutionary spirit exhibited at meetings drew the attention of authorities so that in some areas Indonesian civil servants and members of security forces were forbidden to take part in those meetings or to become members.[17] The nationalists, particularly after Sukarno gained stature in the movement, viewed the Indonesian struggle as limited to the Dutch-held areas of the archipelago. The nationalists stated their sympathy with movements in other countries to gain independence from colonial domination, but maintained that freedom could best be achieved on a national basis, with every people seeking to gain independence in their own land. In a speech in 1928 just after he had become leader of the party, Sukarno confirmed this outlook by stating that Indonesian national aspirations could only

[15] D.G.E. Hall, *Historians of Southeast Asia* (London, 1961), 148–149.
[16] Vlekke, *Nusantara*, 380–383.
[17] Vandenbosch, *East*, 350–352.

be achieved through Indonesian efforts and that Indonesians could not rely on help coming either from the Muslim world or from the international Communist movement in Moscow.[18] This was a direct reference to the work of the Sarekat Islam which had turned to pan-Islamism as a means of gaining international Muslim support for Indonesian independence efforts, and to the communists, led by Tan Malaka, who believed the Soviet Union would eventually come to the aid of their movement if a revolution could once be started.[19] The arrest of Sukarno and several other leaders of the party in 1929 meant loss of popular support for the party, but it survived under new names and more moderate agendas in most cases. Dr. Soetomo and Mohammed Husni Thamrin became the effective organizational leaders until the end of the period.

But the nationalist outlook was not accepted well by the Sarekat Islam loyalists, who were still politically influential. They challenged the nationalists at every turn. First, they found difficulty with the new idea of nationalism, since it challenged the Muslim idea of a trans-ethnic identity on religious lines. They attacked Sukarno's synthesis between secularism and Old Java as a new effort to make "Javanism" the paramount identification and labeled it another of the many ethnic and regional movements calling itself nationalism.[20] A rising Muslim activist, Moehammad Natsir, stated that without Islam, there was no Indonesian nationalism since Islam had "first planted the seeds of Indonesian unity, removed the attitudes of isolation of various islands . . . and planted the seeds of brotherhood with [Muslims] outside Indonesia." He stated that nationalism advocated by the secularists broke down on ethnic lines and that only Islam had an appeal to "hundreds of thousands of people" throughout the whole of Indonesia.[21] The nationalists countered that Islam as a political force was not really suitable for a united nationalist effort since Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and even animists were also involved in the struggle, and adherents of those religions would not support a movement intended to favor Islam and relegate them to a subservient position. Secularism, stated the nationalists, would be a logical compromise since it did not favor any religious group,

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[18] George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca, 1952), 91.
[19] Von der Mehden, *Religion*, 161.
[20] *Pembela Islam*, 42 (January 1932), 2–3.
[21] *Pembela Islam*, 39 (December 1931), 2.

yet allowed every person to follow his own religious principles and obligations.[22] The Muslims responded that the overwhelming majority of the Indonesian population was Muslim, and such an overwhelming majority should determine the basic principles and direction of the nationalist movement. Stating that 90% of the population of the Indies was Muslim—which included populations lightly Islamicized and subject to other value systems—Muslim activists charged that nationalist arrangements gave the 10% minority of the population an actual veto and claimed that such an arrangement was intrinsically unfair. Muslims pointed out that in a Muslim-oriented movement members of other religions would be protected and given certain rights—a guarantee other religions, particularly the Christians, viewed with suspicion and outright hostility, believing that Muslim guarantees would relegate them to second-class membership with little voice in the policy of the movement.

An important point of friction in the Indonesian nationalist movement in the 1930's was the nationalist view of Islam as a moribund religion—retrospective of departed glories,—unconcerned with, and hence incapable of, providing answers to modern questions. "Islamic teachers," lamented Sukarno in his famous correspondence with Ahmad Hassan, "often have no feeling for or touch with history," and confuse the past with the present. He argued further that the Muslim past could not be recaptured, and that a new culture was needed to take its own place in history. "Society," stated Sukarno, "asks to be developed, to the forefront, onward, upward, to 'the future,' and cannot ever be called upon to 'return'!" He cited the cases of Egypt, Persia, Iraq, and especially Turkey, as examples of nations with predominantly Muslim populations that had found it necessary to separate "church" from "state" in order to ensure progress and to move their nations into contact and harmony with the modern world.[23]

The Muslims countercharged that nationalists knew very little about Islam, certainly did not understand it, and were really imitating the separation of church and state as practiced in Europe. Modernist Muslims stated that the spirit and content of the *Qur'ān* was as suited to contemporary life as to the life of Makkah and Madinah in the

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[22] Tamar Djaja, *Pusaka Indonesia Orang-Orang Besar Tanah Air* (Bandung, 1951), 161–162; Sukarno, *Dibawah Bendera Revolusi*, edited by K. Goenadi and Mualliff Nasution (Jakarta, 1963), I, 507–513.

[23] *Ibid.*, I, 336.

seventh century.[24] Agus Salim was able to undercut the communist position at the 1921 congress of the Sarekat Islam by stating that Marxism had no monopoly on socialism and that socialism was justified in the *Qur'ān* and had even been practiced by Muḥammad.[25] In a like manner, Ahmad Hassan argued ten years later that democracy was supported by the *Qur'ān* and had been practiced at the time of the Prophet. He stated that with laws revealed to the Prophet, Muslims had established a "government without equal in performance or in length of time."[26] He also declared that the principles of Islam, and the laws it prescribed would still function well and effectively in the modern period, for they were adaptable to any time and place. The reason for the backwardness of many Muslim countries—and he specifically indicated Turkey, Egypt and Persia, which had adopted secular legal systems and put aside religious law as antiquated—was caused by the failure of Muslims in those countries to adapt religious laws and principles to the contemporary world. Ahmad Hassan charged that secularist leaders of that era, like Kemal Ataturk in Turkey and Riza Shah Pahlevi in Iran, regarded as progressive leaders by the Indonesian secularists, were really ignorant of Islam and afraid that Muslims would displace them in a properly-run Islamic state.[27]

The differences between the nationalists and Muslims in the early 1930's also dealt with the issue of the pilgrimage to Makkah. Dr. Soetomo, an advocate of Javanese culture as the basis of Indonesian nationalism, stated that the Islamic shrine at Makkah, called the Ka'abah. was simply an idol of the Arabs and that Boven Digul prison camp, where nationalist leaders had been interned, had more meaning than Makkah. He maintained that people "went to Digul" out of conviction while Muslims went to Makkah only because of a [superficial] religious obligation.[28] This charge reflected general nationalist thinking about the obligations Islam imposed on believers as a meaningless ritual connected with another country and of considerably less importance than contemporary Indonesian political

[24] Ahmad Hassan, *Pemerintahan Tjara Islam* (Malang and Bangil, 1946), 1–2; *Pembela Islam*, 55 (December 1932), 8.
[25] Von der Mehden, *Religion*, 62, 69.
[26] Hassan, *Pemerintahan*, 2–3.
[27] Ahmad Hassan, *Islam dan Kebangsaan* (Bangil, 1941), 52.
[28] *Ibid.*, 161.

endeavors. Consequently, nationalist leaders' arguments stressed that the pilgrimage was really only an Arab device designed to increase their own wealth at the expense of the non-Arab Muslims,[29] a view that coincided with that of some Dutch economists, who lamented the drain of funds from the East Indies, especially in periods of economic depression. The Muslims considered such statements as efforts to degrade and ridicule a basic tenet of their religion, and numerous protests were made by Muslim organizations and personalities denouncing the nationalist allegations.

Despite such disharmony there was a new drive toward cooperation among Indonesian associations, clubs and other societies in the late 1920's with the hope of forming a formidable political coalition that had fallen apart when the Sarekat Islam lost its influence. The first significant effort in this direction was the creation of a political league in 1928 that brought together a large number of religious, ethnic and regional groups, including the Sarekat Islam and the Partai Nasional Indonesia. The Sarekat Islam withdrew, however, in 1930 after a series of recriminations between the Muslims and the Nationalists over the issues of polygamy, the costs of the Meccan pilgrimage and the alleged extravagance of Sarekat Islam leaders.[30] Thereafter unity of action was seldom apparent and the two sides spent most of the time in seemingly endless polemic. However, conversations in 1937 between Abikoesno for the Muslims and Soetomo for the nationalists were ultimately successful in bringing the two sides into a cooperative grouping to act as a joint negotiating committee to resolve disputes among themselves and to deal with Dutch officials. By 1939 the three most important groups—Gerakan Rajat Indonesia—Gerindo (The Indonesian Peoples Movement), representing most nationalist groups, the Majlisoel Islamil A'laa Indonesia—MIAI (the High Islamic Council of Indonesia), composed of influential Islamic groups, and Persatoen Vakbonden Pegawai Indonesia—PVPN (the Indonesian Union Alliance), the major civil service organization, chose to work together in the Gaboengan Politiek Indonesia—Gapi (Alliance of Indonesian Political Groups). Gapi was successful in sponsoring the first and second Indonesian Peoples' Congresses in 1939 and 1940, which passed unanimous declarations calling

[29] *Pembela Islam*, 26 (May 1931), 8–9.

[30] T. Petrus Blumberger, "De Nationalistische Beweging in Nederlandsch Indie," *ENOI*, I, 898.

for independence to be granted. But cooperation among disparate Indonesian groups was not easy and there were frequent misunderstandings, even though the cooperative arrangement persisted until the arrival of the Japanese in 1942 when new political arrangements were made by the Japanese administration that replaced the Dutch.

3. *The Muslim Political Arena*

A third political arena existed among the Muslims themselves. During this period the players in the Muslim community changed considerably. It was noted in the introduction that two important Indonesian Muslim mass organization had come into existence around 1912 for the promotion of social and educational activities in the Muslim community, i.e., the Muhammadiyah and al-Irsyad. They continued to exist during the second quarter of the century, but there was a change in their individual fortunes. The Muhammadiyah grew into a sizeable organization undertaking social welfare and educational activities in a large part of the Indies, with a membership in 1930 of 24,000, along with a number of ancillary organizations. For example, the women's unit, active in establishment of polyclinics and orphanages, had a membership of 5,000 in 1930.[31] Al-Irsyad stayed relatively small while it continued its work in the Arab-Muslim community, particularly in education, but also in providing an organization for the promotion of the modernist program among Arabs living in the Indies. Al-Irsyad did take some role in general political activities that concerned all Muslims during the period.[32]

Supplementing these two existing organizations, four new ones came into being during this time frame that became important players as well: the Persatuan Islam in 1923, the Jong Islamieten Bond—JIB (Young Muslims' League) in 1924, the Nahdlatul Ulama—NU (Orthodox Scholars' Organization) in 1926, and the Persatuan Moeslimoen Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Union) in 1930. The Persatuan Islam is described in the next chapter. The JIB was a youth organization, involving students in higher education and graduates of those programs to the age of 30. It was under the tutelage of leading Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah leaders and became a vehicle for preparing a new generation of leaders for the Islamic

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[31] T. Petrus Blumberger, "Moehammadiyah," *ENOI*, VI, 269–270.
[32] Mobini-Kescheh, *Hadrami*, 68–131.

community; in fact the alumni of this organization assumed important posts, official and unofficial, in the Muslim organization Masjumi during the Japanese, Revolutionary and Liberal Democracy eras. The JIB gave its attention to the discussion of issues in an intellectual and academic fashion while also deepening the knowledge of its members concerning Islam. It published an important magazine, titled *The Light (Het Licht)* which was intended to stimulate thinking on important issues before the community.[33] The Nahdlatul Ulama was the culmination of efforts by the traditionalist Muslims of Java to organize themselves into a single organization to combat the onslaught of modernist attacks, while working among themselves to strengthen the traditional boarding school system. It was to prove an enduring organization with a very pragmatic political sense, which allowed it to cooperate with other political groupings in a wide variety of political coalitions over time; it remains important in 2000.[34] The Persatuan Moeslimoen Indonesia was an organization of traditionalist scholars in West Sumatra, important in the early 1930's for deciding that "nationalism" was an important ingredient in the anti-Dutch movement and that it was compatible with Islam to recognize the flag and the anthem as important popular symbols.[35]

Meanwhile the major Muslim political organization, the Sarekat Islam, lost membership and ultimately fragmented into several contentious organizations, as leaders lost faith with one another and took their supporters with them to new organizations. Still, at the end of the era, of all the political parties and action groups that existed, whether Muslim or nationalist, the rump Sarekat Islam with its 8,000 members was still the largest organization, illustrating how fractionalized politics among Indonesians had become. The number was a far below the 360,000 members that had been in the Sarekat Islam in 1916 when it was at the height of its organizational strength. Nonetheless throughout the era it remained an important contributor to the Indonesian side in the effort against the Dutch, providing

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[33] Dardiri Husni, "Jong Islamieten Bond: A Study of A Muslim Youth Movement in Indonesia during the Dutch Colonial Era, 1924–1942," M.A. thesis presented to McGill University, 1998; Ridwan Saidi, *Pemuda Islam dalam Dinamika Politik Bangsa 1925–1984* (Jakarta, 1984); T. Petrus Blumberger, "Jeugdbeweging (Inlandsche)" *ENOI*, VII, 186–190.

[34] Choirul Anam, *Pertumbuhan dan Perbembangan Nahdlatul Ulama* (Surabaya, 1985); Martin Van Bruinessen, *NU Tradisi: Relasi-relasi Kuasa* (Yogyakarta, 1994).

[35] *Ensiklopedi Islam Indonesia*, 765–766.

representatives for the People's Council—usually Umar Cokroaminoto and Agus Salim,—and also formulating action programs to organize its followers for the achievement of their long-term aspirations.[36]

There were a number of contests within the Muslim community; the most important were the continuing controversy between the modernist and traditionalists camps, and the campaign against the Ahmadiyah Qadiyan. Within the Islamic community divisions remained and cooperation between the traditionalists and the modernists became more marked. This occurred despite Sarekat Islam efforts beginning in 1922 to bring the two sides together to talk out differences in a series of Islamic conferences, which seemed to heighten rather than ameliorate differences, and the meetings themselves became involved with issues outside Indonesia that probably detracted from concern with Indonesian interests.

a. *Modernists against Traditionalists*

As they had done in the first quarter of the century, modernist Muslims in the second quarter of the century undertook vigorous polemic against the traditionalists for defending certain religious practices that the modernists found objectionable. These objectionable practices included adherence to legal schools of thought, the performance of "unauthorized" ritual, and use of Islamic prayers to sanctify practices that were at odds with religion itself. The modernists marshaled considerable evidence from religious sources, primarily *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*, added the supporting views of modernist Muslims of the Middle East, and argued their case with considerable force. To the modernist way of thinking, the traditionalist insistence on remaining true to methods of interpretation and teachings of religious law expounded by the four classical schools of Muslim jurisprudence and their systems, was regarded as the prime cause for stagnation of Muslim religious life and consequently the cause for loss of Muslim political power in their own lands to the Europeans. This viewpoint became quite popular in Indonesia, and the book *Why Did the Muslims Sleep?*,[37] by the Syrian modernist Amīr Shakīb Arslān was quite popular in the early 1930s, since it expressed that sentiment with

[36] Blumberger, *Nationalistiche Beweging*, 63.

[37] Amīr Shakīb Arslān, *li-mādhā ta'akhkhara'l-muslimūn wa li-mādhā taqaddama ghayruhum?* (Cairo, 1932); it appeared in Indonesian under the title *Menapa Kaum Muslimun Mundur.* (Djakarta, 1957).

considerable detail. In response the traditionalists contended that the truth implicit in the scriptures of Islam as expressed in the teachings of the great Islamic scholars of classical and medieval Islam—al-Ashʿarī and al-Ghazālī in theology, and the scholars of the great legal schools, particularly al-Shāfiʿī—did not change. That truth, the traditionalists argued, did not ever need to be brought to trial since it was not ever altered by change in time and conditions and was as valid in the twentieth century as when it was formulated. A re-examination of *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* was not only unnecessary but also dangerous since it could lead to misinterpretation and error.[38]

To the traditionalist Muslim, religious knowledge, learned by rote in the boarding schools and perhaps at Makkah, was a matter of faith, was infallible, and not necessarily meant to be subject to the scrutiny of reason. It was meant to be understood, not in any way challenged. Hence any attack on these teachings was considered as denying religion itself, and traditionalists responded by charging that the modernists were disbelievers and blasphemers. The depth of feeling among the traditionalists is apparent in an emotional attack leveled against Ahmad Dachlan, the founder of the Muhammadiyah, in which Dachlan was described as "a fanatic, who had deviated from the path of orthodoxy, rejected the accepted schools of thought, ruined the religion, a free thinker, an unmitigated zealot . . . nay a disbeliever, whose tongue, when he died, would come out two meters from his mouth."[39] Similar in content was the admonishment of a member of the traditionalist ʿAlawī group against the works of the *Islamic Defender (Pembela Islam)*: "Fellow Muslims, beware of the works published by *Islamic Defender*, . . . which are false, and quote *Qur'anic* verses out of context. Friends, do not read, accept or buy those books for they lead astray and induce one to become a radical and a modernist. Whether radical or modernist we may not approach them or eat with them for they are more wicked than the Chinese and the Dutch."[40] The modernist Muslims were also given to similar emotional outbursts, and charged that the traditionalist Muslims were not only ignorant in religious matters, but were unwilling to change their outlook because of vested political, social and economic interests. The modernists pointed to the many conservative scholars

[38] Nahdlatul Ulama, "Verslag-Congress . . . Jang ke 14 . . . 6–7 Juli 1939," 19.
[39] ʿAli, "Muhammadijah," 32: *Pembela Islam*, 57 (January 1933), 27.
[40] *Ibid.*

who held positions of responsibility in the Dutch colonial administrative structure,[41] and to their positions of influence and status in the rural villages, and charged that the traditionalists feared loss of these positions and status if they altered their religious views. One such response stated: "Do not trouble your hearts, colleagues, about those who err . . . in religious matters, for they collide with the laws of God and the Prophet like the dumb and blind because of their unquestioning obedience to dead scholars, because they want money, because they want fame, because of selfishness."[42]

One of the fundamental issues between the modernists and the traditionalists revolved about the use of reason in religious matters. The traditionalist Muslims believed that the human mind was generally incapable of grasping the patterns and intricacies of God's commands without a reliable guide. They maintained that the founders of the great Muslim schools of law—who had examined, compiled, explained and interpreted these patterns and intricacies when Islam was still young—had provided such a reliable guide, which needed no alteration. In their system reason was, in general, limited to the application of these teachings to the special problems of life in any particular period of time.[43] The modernists, on the other hand, believed that only the fundamental truths had been set down in the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* and that in every age these truths had to be applied anew to current conditions. The modernists held that this could best be accomplished through open examination, which they defined as examining the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* to discover the legal prescriptions and moral teachings contained therein, and, through reason, applying them to the contemporary situation.[44] The modernists recognized that there was considerable danger in the use of reason, and stressed that reason was only a tool for religious analysis, and not a source of religious knowledge in itself.[45] To guard against such

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[41] Westra, "Custom," 151–167; and T. Petrus Blumberger, "Islam II," *ENOI*, V, 369–381; VI, 351–358.

[42] Persatuan Islam, *Sual-Djawab* (Bandung, 1931–1940), II, 15; *Pembela Islam*, 42 (January 1932), 36.

[43] Nahdlatoel Ulama, *Verslag Congress*, p. 19; Mochtar Naim, "The Nahdlatul Ulama Party (1952–1955)," MA thesis presented to McGill University, 1960, 152; *Al-Lisan*, 5 (April 1936), 35.

[44] C.C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt* (London, 1933), 191–193.

[45] Moehammad Natsir, *Capita Selecta*, edited by Sati Alimin (Bandung and the Hague, 1954) I, 206–229.

danger, investigation should be undertaken only by those trained in this science of religious investigation. "An investigator," stated one modernist, "must know Arabic and its sciences sufficient for . . . understanding the meaning and intention of *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*."[46]

To the traditionalists the term "fresh examination" (*ijtihād*) denoted an unbridled use of reason which they could not accept, and their frequent charge that the modernists were Mu'tazilī (Free Thinkers) was a reflection of their belief that, like the rationalist movement in early Islamic history, i.e., ninth Christian century, the modernists subordinated religion to reason.[47] The traditionalists maintained that open examination, although a legitimate device employed by the founders of the Muslim schools of jurisprudence, could only be used in some very limited circumstances, and that usually acceptance of the views of earlier scholars was the proper method for determining religious truth. In 1935, K.H. Machfoed Shiddieq, a leader of the Nahdlatul Ulama, clarified this stance in several speeches and a pamphlet written on the subject.[48] In particular Shiddieq cited the study of the renowned Indian Ḥanbalī scholar Quṭbaddīn Walīallāh al-Dihlawī, who asserted that every Muslim was expected to employ his capability to determine religious truth, and that some had the capability of becoming high authorities, while others reached lower levels of competence.[49] He maintained it was now impossible for Muslims to rise to the status of "totally independent examiners," who have direct access to religious sources, since that class of scholars existed only in early Islamic history and began the great systematization of the religious law. He stated that contemporary Muslims were capable of becoming secondary interpreters, i.e., those who accepted the principles already formulated by the first great scholars, and applied those principles to more practical problems of the present era.[50] This interpretation was rejected by the modernists on the basis that it attempted to blur the importance of fresh interpretation and to deny Muslims access to the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* with-

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[46] Ahmad Hassan, *Risalah al-Madz-hab* (Bangil, 1955), 6; cf. Abdur Rahim, *Principles of Muhammedan Jurisprudence* (London, 1911), 119.

[47] See Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago and London, 1961), II, 384–386.

[48] K.H. Mahfudz Shiddiq, *Sekitar Soal Idjihad dan Taqlid* (Jakarta, 1959), 64–65.

[49] *Ibid.*, 64; Abdur Rahim, *Jurisprudence*, 182–184.

[50] Shiddiq, *Sekitar*, 64; cf., Abdur Rahim, *Jurisprudence*, 169.

out the added explanations of past scholars; and this the modernists would not accept on practical grounds.[51]

The modernists' stress on direct access to basic religious sources did not mean a total rejection of religious decisions made in the classical or medieval periods, and they frequently stated that such decisions should be considered as an aid in deriving new religious decisions. For example, the statutes of the Madjlis Tardjih, the Muhammadiyah's council on Muslim law, stated that all of its religious opinions were to be based on *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*, but that every precaution was to be taken so that rational interpretation not take precedence over the traditional.[52] The Persatuan Islam, like the Muhammadijah, reviewed the important decisions of past scholars—classical, medieval and modern—before rendering a decision on any subject. In both organizations the opinion, although stressing *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*, frequently reviewed previous opinions on the subject being examined, noted the differences in interpretation among the scholars, and listed their own preference given current conditions.[53] This regard for the teachings of past Muslims tended to inhibit any radical departures from past Muslim practices and kept the modernists essentially conservative despite their emphasis on fresh examination.

This difference of attitude between the modernists and the traditionalists was also carried over into their respective attitudes toward the role of the lay Muslims in religious affairs. The traditionalists held that the religious teacher was the only qualified interpreter of the teachings on religious law and doctrine, and that the unlearned were obliged to accept those interpretations without question and without further proof.[54] The modernist Muslims, on the other hand, held that while only the learned were capable of authoritative interpretation of religious sources, the unlearned also had a duty to exercise mental effort. For that reason the Muhammadiyah established its legal unit to provide guidance in matters of Islamic law so that its members would no longer be tied to the Shāfi'ī rite, and so that

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[51] *Al-Lisan*, 5 (February 1936), 35–36; see also *Al-Lisan* (Extraordinary issue) (December 1935), 7; *Al-Lisan*, 5 (April 1936), 35.

[52] Muhammadiyah, *Anggaran Dasar Muhammadijah dan Anggaran Rumah Tangga* (Yogyakarta, 1952), 31; see also, H. Fathurrahman Djamil, *Metode Ijtihad Majlis Tarjih Muhammadiyah* (Jakarta, 1995), 70–78.

[53] See *Sual-Djawab*, II, 1–3.

[54] *Al-Lisan* (Extraordinary issue) (December 1935), 7.

its members would be encouraged to exercise freedom in matters of religious law.[55]

Aside from the general disagreement as to the sources of religion, the dispute carried over into several specific issues, that became and remained controversies between the two groups throughout the period of time under discussion. Four of the issues are discussed here as illustrative of the entire range: the language of the Friday sermon, prompting the deceased at the grave, the use of "intention" before the beginning of prayer, and the status of descendants of the Prophets in the Muslim community. These four were at the core of the differences.

Regarding the Friday sermon, the standard practice in the Netherlands Indies had always been to read or recite the sermon (*khuṭbah*) in Arabic; and, if queried, religious scholars would presumably have answered that as part of the ritual of worship it must necessarily be in Arabic. The modernist Muslims agreed that prayer had necessarily to be in Arabic, but that since the purpose of the sermon is to inform Muslims concerning proper religious and moral behavior that it should be given in a language understood by the listeners. Mosques under the influence of modernists often had the sermon given in the local language, claiming that there was no prohibition against it, but large numbers continued to use Arabic for the sermon, either in deference to custom or because they sided with the traditionalists on the matter.[56]

Concerning burial procedure, Muslim belief on death—greatly developed and defined by medieval Muslim theologians—held that immediately after the completion of the burial ceremony, the deceased was visited by the angels Nakīr and Munkar who asked the deceased questions to determine his real belief and exacted painful retribution if the answers were wrong. While Muslim theologians maintained that the questions posed by the angels could be answered properly if the deceased had lived a pious life, the practice grew up in Islam of giving one last prompting (*talqīn*) to the deceased during the burial ceremony by reciting the confession of faith. Generally, the religious official performing the ceremony read or recited the funeral speech in Arabic, and sometimes in Bahasa Indonesia or in the ver-

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[55] *Syafiq A. Mughni*, "Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'lah dan Posisi Teologi Muhammadiyah," in *Gebyar Muktamar Muhammadiyah Ke-43* (Yogyakarta, 1995), 50–54.

[56] Pijper, *Studien*, 46–51.

nacular.[57] The modernists disapproved of this practice, arguing that it was not commanded in the *Qur'ān, Ḥadīth* or in the customs of the Companions of the Prophet, and charged that it was an accretion (*bid'ah*), taken into religious practice later in history, and hence was an innovation, unacceptable in matters of religious worship.[58] Traditionalists argued that even though clear reference could not be found in religious scripture, that the act was beneficial and hence was a meritorious addition that could be allowed. Here we find the essence of the argument that was to pervade the thinking of the two sides: the modernists held to the dictum that in worship everything is forbidden unless specifically stated in *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*, while the traditionalists held that, even though change in worship was forbidden, some additions that promoted piety could be added without harm and, hence, could be considered meritorious.

The dispute regarding silently reciting an "intention" (niyyah) made at the beginning of regular daily prayers apparently originated on Sumatra about 1910 when Abdul Karim Amrullah declared that the practice of repeating aloud this vow of intention could not be traced back to the Prophet, but was an innovation from a later date. Amrullah's opponents maintained that the "intention" prepared the worshiper to undertake sincere worship, and in that context was an aid to worship, and hence permissible. Their charges that Amrullah was a heretic because of his stand produced a lively exchange of polemic between his supporters and their opponents.[59]

The issue regarding the status of the Arabs in the Malay-Indonesian world was actually an extension of the controversy existing in Islam since the Arab expansion in the seventh century when non-Arabs entered Islam and debate arose as to whether Arabs, as the original people of Muḥammad, should hold a status superior to that of the newcomers. This controversy assumed considerable importance among Indonesians in the first half of the twentieth century because of the sizeable Arabic community—about 71,000 in 1930[60]—and the

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[57] C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, trans. by R.J. Wilkinson (London and Leiden, 1906) I, 418–434; Geertz, *Religion* 68–76; Thomas P. Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam* (London, 1895), 627.

[58] See Persatuan Islam, *Boekoe Verslag Debat Talqien* (Bandung, 1932); Persatuan Islam, *Kitab Talqien.: Djawaban "Persatoean Islam" atas Tulisan H. Hoesain Tjitjalengka* (Bandung, n.d.).

[59] Hamka, *Ajahku*, 72–73.

[60] Van der Kroef, *Indonesia*, I, 250.

existence in that community of a large number of persons claiming direct descent from the Prophet. An aura of respect and even reverence had grown up around the Arabs in Indonesia—partly because a large number of religious teachers were Arab, partly because the Arabs were more serious about their everyday religious observances than the general Indonesian population and were envied for it, and partly because the Arabs allowed the illusion to grow that the race of the Prophet Muhammad constituted an aristocracy among Muslims. There was some sentiment for modernist Muslim principles among the Indonesian-born Arabs, as was evidenced by the success of the Al-Irsyad association, but for the most part, the Arab community in Indonesia preferred traditionalist Islam.[61] The chief representative of this conservative viewpoint was the ʿAlawī[62] group of *Hadrami* Arabs claiming descent from the Prophet, who furnished a large number of religious officials in Indonesia. Through such organizations as the Jamʿiat Chairiyya (Benevolent Society) and the Masyarakat Thalibin (Education Society), this group attacked the modernist Muslims, particularly those in al-Irsyad, and acted as the spokesman for Arabs defending the special position allotted them by the local population.[63]

In particular, hard feeling centered on ʿAlawī insistence that a woman with descent from the Prophet could marry only an Arab of the Qurayshī tribe, preferably tracing his own descent to the Prophet. It was ʿAlawī belief that for a woman with such pedigree to marry someone not having equally exalted antecedents would cast an unfavorable reflection on the status of the ʿAlawī, on the Quraysh, on Fāṭimah (the daughter of the Prophet), and even on the Prophet himself. This restriction was not binding on men, and indeed Arab men frequently married Indonesian women.[64] In 1933 at least two cases of ʿAlawī opposition to particular marriages between Arab women with pedigrees and Indonesian men was given news coverage and attendant response by modernist Muslim groups who felt that the insistence on exclusivity violated the Islamic principle of equality among believers.[65]

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[61] *Ibid.*, I, 270.
[62] Mobini-Kesheh, *Hadrami*, 92–107.
[63] Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Moderen Islam di Indonesia 1900–1942* (Jakarta, 1980), 66–73.
[64] *Pembela Islam*, 45 (April 1932), 27–31.
[65] *Pembela Islam*, 48 (June 1932), 17–18.

In general the feuding that took place between modernists and traditionalists throughout the era and beyond was enervating for the Muslim community. Modernist insistence that the issues be raised in every meeting where both sides came together, and the strong, often sarcastic polemic against one another created a great rift, not only among the activists, but among the population in general. As in the earlier period the sides became strongly exclusive and sometimes banned members of the other side from their activities and even burial in the cemeteries controlled by one group or the other. The efforts at creating the unity organization MIAI in the late 1930s had to deal with just that issue and it was only with extraordinary patience that the organizers were successful in establishing a modicum of cooperation.

b. *The Ahmadiyah Qadiyan Controversy*

The second matter of dispute in the Muslim community was over the permissibility of the Ahmadiyah to claim special titles of respect for its founder and whether, indeed, the movement actually belonged to Islam. The Ahmadiyah Qadiyan movement,[66] which held that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a Muslim prophet, first began its efforts to proselytize Indonesians in 1925 when several Indonesian students returned from the organization's school in the Panjab, in India, where they had studied Ahmadiyah doctrine and been converted to its belief. These students were accompanied by Rahmat ʿAli, representative of the movement from India, who undertook vigorous missionary activity with the aid of the returned students. Initially their activity was limited to Sumatra, particularly the Minangkabau area, where they aroused the opposition of the Muslim religious scholars of the region, but still gained a small number of converts. The initial response to Ahmadiyah efforts by the Indonesian Sunnī community was not very focused, and the weak counter-arguments to Ahmadiyah contentions did little to mobilize the community against the movement. As they became familiar with Ahmadiyah arguments and manner of approach, however, the religious scholars of West Sumatra eventually developed arguments that proved effective in

[66] J.Th. Petrus Blumberger, "Ahmadyah," *ENOI*, VI, 10–11; Blumberger, *Beweging*, 348–350; C.F. Pijper, "De Ahmadijah in Indonesië," *Bingkisan Budi* (Leiden, 1950), 247–254.

countering Rahmat 'Ali's propaganda, and probably greatly checked the rate of conversion of Muslims to the new sect.[67]

In 1925, Rahmat 'Ali widened the area of his campaign to include Java, and, in the ensuing years, issued religious propaganda and debated religious belief with several Muslim groups. The primary Ahmadiyah missionaries in this effort were Mirza Wali Baig and Maulana Ahmad who had previously been in South Africa. On Java the campaign was challenged by three groups: the Muhammadiyah, the Jong Islamieten Bond, and the Persatuan Islam. Initially some Muhammadiyah groups found the Ahmadiyah message appealing and several members joined the organization. But after studying the doctrines of the movement, particularly its claim that its founder was a prophet, Muhammadiyah leaders rejected the movement as contrary to Islam.[68] Those who converted remained convinced of the Ahmadiyah's legitimacy, broke with the Muhammadiyah, and founded the Gerakan Ahmadiyah Indonesia Centrum Lahore—GAI (Ahmadiyah Movement in Indonesia) In the same time frame Ahmadiyah leaders approached the Jong Islamieten Bond and was received with friendliness. However, at a special meeting in January 1929 a resolution was passed by the Jong Islamieten Bond that reasserted its dedication to the standard practices of Islam without directly confronting the Ahmadiyah movement itself. But in subsequent publications of the *The Light* a distinction was made between the Lahore Section of the Ahmadiyah, which regarded Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a "renovator," and the Qadiyan branch which regarded their founder as a prophet. Representatives of the Lahore Section were even given space in *The Light* to explain their views, while the Qadiyan branch was not given the same opportunity and, indeed, was judged as having many doctrines that fell outside of standard Islam.[69] Finally, the Ahmadiyah was challenged to public debate by the Persatuan Islam and two sessions were finally arranged, one in Bandung and the other in Jakarta both in 1933, which drew sizeable crowds, including Dutch officials for the session in Jakarta. The conclusions of the Persatuan Islam were the same as those of the Muslim scholars of Sumatra and the leaders of the Muhammadiyah, i.e., that Ahmadiyah Qadiyan's teachings fell outside of the standard teach-

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[67] Hamka, *Ajahku*, 109–113.
[68] Husni, "Jong," 86.
[69] *Ibid.*, 88–97.

ings of Islam. Muslim magazine and newspaper coverage of the group was strong and hostile toward the Indian group. As a result of this reaction the Ahmadiyah groups in Indonesia remained relatively small and isolated throughout the era and probably received more attention from the modernist Muslim organizations than was warranted by their size and influence.

4. *Inter-religious Controversies: The Christian-Muslim Polemic*

A fourth arena for political action occurred between Muslims and Christians generally. Suspicions and recriminations between Muslims and Christians had marked the relations of the two communities in the first part of the century and this continued in the second part. What differed on the Christian side was that foreign-born Christian missionaries, usually from the Netherlands, felt relatively free to criticize Islam openly and also that local Christians, apparently taking their cue from the Europeans, took part in the criticism as well. On the Muslim side the apologetic and polemic was more undisguised and hostile than it had been in the earlier period, perhaps reflecting the spirit of the times when most matters of dispute became political issues and were argued hard and long. Among the foreign born missionaries who took part in this controversy were Hendrik Kraemer and J.J. Ten Berge. Kraemer's remarks were contained in a book written in 1928 as a manual for Christian teachers in Indonesian and later in English, apparently for use of missionaries elsewhere. As a book designed to promote missionary conversion either among Muslims or in competition with Muslims, it reflected the attitudes of a true believer against an adversary and in that context was probably not intended to incite controversy within Indonesia itself. In the book Kraemer did not find the spirituality of Islam as comparable to that of Christianity and he questioned whether the Prophet Muḥammad was a prophet or servant of God.[70] The Jesuit priest J.J. Ten Berge published his criticism in a scholarly article in 1931 and was gratuitous in his remarks by speaking of Muḥammad as ". . . the ignorant Arab, the gross sensualist . . ."[71] Indonesian Muslim

[70] H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (New York, 1938), 215–226; Ismatu Ropi, "Muslim Responses to Christianity in Modern Indonesia." MA thesis presented to McGill University, 1998, 38–39.

[71] *Pembela Islam*, 32 (August 1931), 27–28.

response was considerable in both cases with demonstrations and a spate of newspaper and magazine responses in several of the cities, particularly Surabaya and Bandung, calling the remarks in both cases slander against Islam and against its Prophet. A number of local committees—the one in Surabaya was very active—were formed by Muslims and issued counter statements and organized demonstrations in protest.

There were two major cases involving non-Europeans living in Indonesia. In April 1931, shortly after the Ten Berge articles appeared, Oei Bee Thay in the Chinese daily *Hoakieu* characterized Muḥammad as "an aspiring self-murderer, insane and a robber." In 1937, Siti Sumandari and Soeroto published an article in the nationalist newspaper *Bangunan (Arise!)* which charged that Islam's views on polygyny and marriage were caused by the Prophet's "desires and jealousy." Muslim reaction to these articles was immediate and hostile. The Islamic Committee in Surabaya, established to protest the ten Berge and *Hoakieu* articles, prompted the editors to retract the statement. Sumandari and Soeroto apologized after most leading Muslim organizations protested their statements, and the Partai Indonesia Raja—Parindra (Greater Indonesia Party), to which they belonged, put pressure on them in the interests of Indonesian nationalist harmony.[72] Throughout the period under discussion, Indonesian Muslims wrote articles and held meetings protesting missionary activity and calling for a halt in Muslim areas. In 1934, Muhammadijah leader Hadji Fachroeddin wrote a pamphlet against the Christian mission effort and against Christianity in general which gained considerable readership among Indonesian Muslims.[73] The Ummat Islam organization at Solo held a congress of Indonesian Muslim leaders in 1933 and sent recommendations to the government to continue controls on missionary activities in areas of heavy Muslim population because Christian spokesmen were urging that such restrictions be lifted.[74] The 1939 MIAI Congress passed a resolution against expanded missionary activity in the Indies, which took on added meaning since MIAI was a coalition of all the leading Muslim organizations, political and non-political, in Indonesia.[75] It also assigned to the Persatuan

[72] Noer, *Gerakan*, 169.
[73] Sukarno, *Dibawah*, I, 330.
[74] *Adil*, 152 (April 1933), 153ff.; *Pembela Islam*, 61 (May 1933), 30–33.
[75] Haji Aboebakar Atjeh, *Sedjarah Hidup K.H.A. Wahid Hasjim dan karangan tersiar* (Jakarta, 1957), 315.

Islam the task of preparing a response to Christian attacks on Islam.[76]

For their part, Muslim writers usually pointed to conditions they regarded as shortcomings of Western culture and cited them as examples of the failure of Christianity to regulate political and social life. For example it was charged that the horrors of the First World War showed Christian society to lack fundamental spiritual feeling.[77] As well, it was maintained that European difficulties with their colonies during the 1930's were further evidence of Christian moral bankruptcy.[78] Muslim activists pointed to the reported crime rate in Western countries and maintained it was caused by heavy consumption of alcohol and free association between sexes. One particular writer cited alarming statistics, which he claimed were official, of widespread illegitimacy of children, incidence of syphilis, and abortion in America as indication of great decay in Christian civilization. This polemic was part of the general disdain felt for Western culture by many Indonesians because it was associated with Dutch colonialism, but here it was expressed as a dislike of Christianity because Muslims thought in religious terms.[79]

Further, Muslims had long believed that the Dutch favored Christianity over Islam and saw mission activity as an attempt to undermine and destroy Islam. Dutch government attempts to claim government evenhandedness in religious affairs in the 1930's were not believed and regarded as mere propaganda. Muslim activists could point, in particular, to the large amount of government aid given to Christian religious schools because they qualified for government educational grants while the amount given to Muslim schools was infinitely smaller.[80] For example, in 1936 the subsidies given to Christian groups was f. 972,600 and only f. 7,500 went to Muslim schools; several years later the discrepancy was even larger.[81] However, the Muslim claims do not tell the entire story and Christian groups had their own problems with Dutch colonialism which prompted many Christian groups to side with the growing independence movement. It was the nationalist groups that were able to recruit the

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[76] Ahmad Hassan, *Ketoehanan Jesoes menoeroet Bijbel* (Bandung, 1940), 1.
[77] *Pembela Islam*, 21 (March 1931), 25.
[78] *Pembela Islam*, 29 (July 1931), 15–16.
[79] *Pembela Islam*, 21 (March 1931), 26–27; *Pembela Islam*, 20 (February 1931), 6–7; *Pembela Islam*, 21 (March 1931), 24–29.
[80] Noer, *Gerakan*, 180–190.
[81] Ropi, "Responses," 34.

Christian populations to the cause of independence and discovered that their common faith with the Dutch was not enough to convince them to side with Dutch on the issue of colonialism. Christians wanted independence as much as the Muslims did. But, there was still much to be learned on both sides before Muslims and Christians could really be political allies. Christians had to take another look at Islam and see it less critically and Muslims had to learn to explain their religion without overreaction to the comments they regarded as hostile. Throughout this era under discussion, however, this re-examination had not taken place and there was considerable stress on both sides.

C. *Important Social Considerations*

1. *Creating a New Indonesian Muslim Literature*

Modernist Muslim thinking led inexorably to a new kind of religious literature, based on the use of the vernacular as its vehicle. Heretofore the language of Islam in Southeast Asia had been Arabic and the literature used to study that religion was written in that language, except some material between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries that had been written in Malay utilizing Arabic script (*jawi*). For the most part the Muslim literature that did exist in the early 1920's was Arabic, whether the reader was a student learning the rudiments of the religion, an adult seeking edification, or a scholar seeking authoritative answers to religious quandaries. Actually there was an extensive literature available for such purposes and the pertinent books found their way through society via booksellers and by passage of the texts among Muslims themselves. Some people closely identifying themselves with Islam, such as Muslim merchants or people trained at Islamic boarding schools used these books, and read from them singularly or collectively, often in the mosque around prayer times. Hence books on *Qur'ānic* commentary, such as *Commentary of the Two Jalāls*, al-Bayḍāwī's *Commentary*, al-Rāzī's *Great Commentary*, and Ibn Kaṭīr's *Abundance of the Qur'ān* were well known.[82] Books on mysticism by other leading Islamic authorities from the Islamic past, such as al-Ghazālī, ʿAbd al-Qadīr al-Jilānī and Ibn ʿArabī were also

[82] al-Maḥallī and al-Sayūṭī, *tafsīr al-jalālain*, al-Bayḍāwī, *anwār al-tanzīl*; al-Rāzī, *tafsīr al-kabīr*; Ibn Kaṭir, faḍā'il al-qur'ān.

popular.[83] As well, books on Islamic law, its principles and its rulings, such as the *Book of Guidance* were equally well known.[84] Th. Juynboll, in his discussion of the Shāfiʿī school of jurisprudence covers large numbers of books that were extant in Southeast Asia, not only among religious scholars but among learned members of the population as well.[85]

With the rise of modernism the stress in religious literature changed to the vernacular. It was ascertained relatively early in the movement that rituals and the scripture of the *Qurʾān* were necessarily in Arabic as they had been put in place by Muḥammad with the command to keep them pure and intact. Other matters of religion were seen by the modernists as explanatory and, hence, could be communicated in language that was comprehensible to the user. While many modernists believed it important that Muslims continue to learn Arabic for use in knowing fully the lessons of Islam, it was no longer deemed necessary to understand the religious message by first mastering Arabic. Once this principle had become established, modernist Muslim teachers and activists then became interested in building a new literature that would broaden the base of readers, since learning Arabic as a requisite earlier had kept the numbers artificially limited. Presses issuing the new literature were located throughout the archipelago, although the most prominent were located on Sumatra and on Java. On Sumatra, for example, an important press existed at Padang where the modernist Muslim magazine *The Ray (Al-Munir)* was published and this press also issued booklets and pamphlets by several of the modernist writers in the Minangkabau area in the early part of the century, such as Hadji Rasul and Abdullah Achmad.[86]

On Java three important centers of the new literature can be noted: the Sitti Sjamsiyah press at Solo, the Muhammadiyah press at Yogyakarta, and the Persatuan Islam press at Bandung. There were many other presses throughout Java and adjacent islands, but these three were the primary producers of a modernist Muslim literature. The Sitti Sjamsiyah press was important because it was a publisher of Islamic works dealing with Islam as it was generally

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[83] al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā ʿulūm al-dīn*; Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, *futūḥ al-ghayb*; Ibn ʿArabī, *al-futūḥat al-makkiyah.*

[84] *Kitab Pepatah.*

[85] Juynboll, *Handleiding*; Yunus, *Sejarah*, 35–38; K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri, *Guruku: Orang-orang dari Pesantren* (Bandung, 1977), 34–36; Dhofier, *Tradisi*, 50–51.

[86] Hamka, *Ajahku*, 86; *Ensiklopedi Islam Indonesia*, 692.

recognized among the Javanese people. According to the entries in C. Ockeloen, the leading reference concerning publications in this era, the overwhelming number were in the Javanese language and used the standard Sanskrit script, although there was also use of the Arabic script. Some works were written in Malay/Indonesian using the Latin script. The subject matter covered three primary fields—Islamic texts expressing a standard Sunnī perspective, works on Islamic mysticism, and texts from Javanese authors who explained religion from a Javanese perspective. Hence in the first group, we have the work *Açrarriççijan*, published in 1927, which was a clarification of fasting, general religious information and Islamic culture. Alongside this were two booklets by Moefti Moehammadi, each under one hundred pages, one giving the substance of several Friday sermons, and the other listing the attributes of God. Further, there was the more technical *Ḥadīth in Javanese*, a set of relatings about the Prophet Muḥammad, published in 1930, which were taken from the authoritative Bukhārī collection as chosen by the Arabic scholar Ḥusayn bin Mubārak az-Zubidī. Finally there was a text of 50 some pages in Malay/Indonesian titled *A Guide for Qur'ānic Instruction*, which purported to explain God's general message to humankind. The first two were in Javanese and the third was in Indonesian.[87] In the second group, stressing mysticism, were such books as the *Mystical Wisdom* by Moefti Muhammadi and Abdoerrahman Bratasoedira's *Islamic Mysticism*, both of which recognized the popularity of mystical practice on Java, but called for care in following the mystical path set by early scholars of Islam.[88] For example the work by Bratasoedira drew heavily on *Ḥadīth* set forth by Bukhārī to describe the standards he wanted to see used. In the third group, i.e., Javanese texts, there were the works of M. Ihsanoeddin which outlined the *Book on Reconciliation*, the *Secrets for Guiding the Spirit* and the *Husband and Wife*, all books that dealt with Javanese culture and attempted to apply Islam to the philosophical systems common in that culture.[89] Of the

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[87] Sitti Syamsijah editorial staff, *Açarriççijan* (Solo, 1927); Moefti Moehammadi, *Choethah Rijaja* (Solo, 1928); Moefti Moehammadi, *Ngilmoe Ka-Allah-an* (Solo, 1928); Sitti Syamsiyah editorial staff, *Hadis Djawen* (Solo, 192?); Sitti Sjamsijah editorial staff, *Pedoman Pendidikan al-Qoeran* (Solo, 1928).

[88] Moefti Moehammadi, *Ngilmoe Makrifat* (Solo, 1926); Abdoerrahman Bratasoedira, *Tasaoewuf Islam* (Solo, n.d.).

[89] M. Ihsanoeddin, *Kitab Mandangi* (Solo, n.d.); M. Ihsanoeddin, *Rijalhadoennafoes* (Solo, n.d.); M. Ihsanoeddin, *Salaki Rabi* (Solo, n.d.).

three Javanese Muslim publishers this is the one with the widest range, perhaps because it was closely associated with Javanese culture and attempted to bring Islam into a more prominent position in that system than had been operative earlier.[90]

The most extensive modernist Muslim press on Java was operated by the Muhammadiyah at Yogyakarta, called "Persatuan"; there were branch presses in several other cities on and off Java where Muhammadiyah organizational activity was prominent. Banjarmasin and Probolinggo were two cases in point, where a number of pamphlets and booklets were published. At Yogyakarta the amount of printed material issued by the Muhammadiyah was significant. Some of it came from the organization itself, such as the Section on Propagation, or from the Section on Legal Review. There was also considerable material from a group of writers associated with the Muhammadiyah, intended to explain and enhance the modernist message of the organization. Books of the Muhammadiyah were, like those of Sitti Sjamsiyah, in both Indonesian and Javanese, although those in Javanese were frequently published using the Arabic script in a form called *pegon.* However, the number of publications in Indonesian was appreciably higher, with some books having a secondary printing in another language, often Javanese. The books themselves focused on basic teachings of Islam, such as worship, ritual purity, points of belief, burial matters, inheritance, and the obligations of women. We might cite here the works of Hadji Hadikoesoema titled *A Treasury of Faith, Qur'anic Commentary: Juz Amma Recitation Section, The Spirit of Expression,* and *Treasury of Guidance*[91] and those by R.H. Hadjid titled *The Book of Good Practice, The Book of Fine Teachings,* and *Teacher's Guide for Propagation.*[92] There was also several books that spoke out against some practices found objectionable by the organization, but still practiced by Muslims, such as "prompting" the deceased at the grave site and using mysticism for purposes other than called for by Islam. Among this group might be cited *Book on Handling the Corpse, Book on Prompting at the Gravesite,* and *Book on Ritual*

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[90] C. Ockeloen, *Catalogus dari boekoe-boekoe dan madjallah jang diterbitkan di Indonesia* (Bandung, 1937), 6v.

[91] H. Hadikoesoema, *Poestaka Iman* (Yogyakarta, 1925); H. Hadikoesoema, *Tasiroe'l-Koran (Djuz Amma)* (Yogyakarta, 1928); H. Hadikoesoema, *Ruh al-Bayan* (Yogyakarta, 1928); H. Hadikoesoema, *Poestaka Hadi* (Yogyakarta, 1936).

[92] R.H. Hadjid, *Boekoe Mardi Sempoerna* (Yogyakarta, 1921); R.H. Hadjid, *Boekoe Woelang Siswa* (Yogyakarta, n.d.); R.H. Hadjid, *Goeroe Tabligh* (Yogyakarta, 1934).

Purity, all issued by the Section on Legal Review, which used a panel of Muslim scholars to review those matters and come to a consensus about them on the basis of scriptural texts.[93] While the literature was mostly geared to teaching the standard lessons of Islam there were some titles that moved to other areas, such as Haanie's *The Book Concerning the Existence of an Islamic State or the Characteristics of Muslim Rule*, a 64 page tract on the essence of political rule in Muslim kingdoms and states earlier in history with emphasis on early Islam.[94] This piece of writing was not very political considering the other writings at the time, but still expressed views about a subject that Muhammadiyah leaders did not ordinarily emphasize in the work of the organization, but was of considerable interest to members. By far this is the most extensive literature issued for the era.[95] The third press, operated by the Persatuan Islam at Bandung, will be covered in the next chapter.

2. *The Expanding Role of Education*

We have seen above that there was a significant expansion of the Dutch education system during this era and that it came to encompass a portion of the Indonesian population. However, despite that expansion it did not meet the needs and expectations of the general population and there was considerable room, indeed, even a demand, that religious schools continue to operate and enlarge their operations. Consequently, there was a steady expansion of schools by Christian, Muslim and Hindu personages and associations to meet this demand. The educational trends began in the first part of the century continued in the Muslim community and there was an expansion of the number of the boarding schools centering on traditional Islamic sciences, as well as an increase in the number of the madrasah which mixed both general subjects and those of an Islamic nature. At the end of the era, in 1942, the Japanese compiled statistics that set the number of schools operated by religious teachers on Java at 1,831, with a total of 139,415 pupils,[96] a figure comparable to those

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[93] Muhammadiyah, *Majlis Tarjih, Kitab Talkin* (Yogyakarta, 1929); Muhammadijah, Majlis Tarjih, *Kitab Thahrah* (Yogyakarta, 1933).

[94] Haanie, *Kitab Keadaanja "Pemerintahan Tjara Islam" atau sifatnja "De Mohammadansche Regeering"* (Yogyakarta, 1929).

[95] *Ibid.*

[96] Dhofier, *Tradisi*, 41.

in the Dutch-sponsored educational system. The Muslim contribution to education was significant in numbers, but, of course, provided somewhat different outcomes for its pupils and students than those that attended Dutch schools.

The boarding school system relied heavily on the families of the existing operators since they trained the aspirants for founding more such institutions. In his study on the Javanese boarding schools Z. Dhofier points to the natural drive of the religious teacher to train his own sons and other promising students for such roles, while marrying his daughters to sons of other teachers who were interested in the same teaching careers.[97] In a time when education was afforded considerable respect in society, the number of schools expanded and the founding of several mass organizations—the Nahdlatul Ulama and the Persatuan Tarbijah Islam—with these teachers as the core members, gave the institutions a further boost in importance. There was a tendency among such teachers to believe that Islamic sciences were a suitable education for all times and places and many did not change their approaches during this time frame. But some teachers were quite willing to offer educations that answered, at least in part, recognition of the general subjects offered in Dutch schools, which seemed to have high relevance to the economic and social demands of the time. Consequently, we see attempts to do this at the Tebureng and Gontor schools where grade levels were installed and teaching techniques extended beyond rote memorization.

The madrasah system rapidly became the education of choice among Muslims at this time. It was based on the assumption that a blend could be made between the learning of the boarding school with its emphasis on religious sciences and the Dutch school system with its stress on general subjects, i.e., modern languages and literature, mathematics, science, history and geography. In this development the Minanagkabau region in Western Sumatra led the way. By 1933 there were 1213 schools in the region serving 69,983 pupils as compared with the Dutch schools with 189 schools with 32,286 students.[98] The great majority of them were madrasah-style schools with a mixture of Islamic sciences and general subjects, with general subjects being the larger part of the offerings. In 1936 a conference

[97] *Ibid.*, 68–78.
[98] Abdullah, *Schools*, 211–213.

of madrasah schools was held in Padang, sponsored by Mahmud Yunus and Mochtar Yunus, which established some criteria for the schools. It was determined that the grades would be set in equivalents to the Dutch system so that some transferability would be possible and this system extended from the elementary level through to higher education.[99] T. Abdullah asserts that the private Muslim investment in education at this moment in history was a response to the Dutch failure to provide Dutch schools and suggests that greater Dutch efforts would probably have forestalled that development.[100] On Java the experience was different, perhaps because the Dutch regarded the island as central to its efforts economically, politically and socially, so that institution of educational institutions received more priority than elsewhere. Still, among the native population Dutch efforts centered only on the elite classes and left large sections of the population with only the most rudimentary learning facilities. Hence there was considerable room for Muslims to maintain and broaden their educational system on Java. But here the primary efforts at establishing madrasahs was done by the operators of boarding schools who sometimes opened a madrasah alongside their traditional boarding schools. The arrangement was eventually systematized with a somewhat different arrangement of levels than the Minangkabau system. Since the effort in Minangkabau was led mostly by modernist Muslims interested in some experimentation, the use of teaching techniques and textbooks were imitative of the limited Dutch schools operating there, while on Java, where the traditionalist Muslims spearheaded the Muslim drive, there was less experimentation and imitation of the Dutch, preferring to simply modify the boarding school pattern to answer new demands. The other difference was in the ratio of religious subject matter to general subject matter; on Java it reversed the ratio of Minangkabau, offering about 30% general course material and 70% religious sciences.[101]

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[99] The Conference set the following divisions. The Madrasah Awaliah took in students at six or seven years of age, lasted for three years, and corresponded to the Dutch SR. The Madrasah Ibtidiah took in students eight or nine years old, lasted for three years, and corresponded to the Dutch Schakel schools. The Madrasah Tsanawiah continued for an additional three years, and corresponded to the Dutch MULO schools. The Madrasah Muallimin was a normal school lasting three or four years corresponding to the Dutch HIK schools. The Madrasah Islam Tinggi, lasting four years was calculated to be the equivalent of the Dutch university. See Yunus, *Sejarah*, 96–103.

[100] *Ibid.*, 211.

[101] Yunus, *Sejarah*, 210.

The other significant development in Islamic education was undertaken by the Muhammadiyah, which saw Western-style education as having considerable merit and as worth sponsoring. Consequently, in the 1920s, in particular, there was an effort to establish Dutch schools, staffed with Indonesian teachers, often Muhammadiyah members trained at Dutch normal schools, which were operated with a subsidy from the Dutch and supplemental fees from parents enrolling their children. Alongside this general education the Muhammadiyah established afternoon classes for children who attended Dutch schools in the morning, where rudimentary principles of Islam were covered. Familiarity with the *Qur'ān*, and with the relationship of religion to general life in Indonesia were apparently stressed. By 1932 the Muhammadiyah was operating 165 government schools and an additional 68 afternoon religious classes for government schools unconnected with its own system.[102]

3. *Standardizing the Behavior of the Muslim Community*

It was explained in the introduction that Dutch scholars of the late nineteenth century regarded animism as common in the behavior of the peoples of the Indonesian archipelago and that even among groups belonging to Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and Muslim groups that animism was present in many of their rites, practices and attitudes. All Muslim groupings—modernist and traditionalist—understood that the situation should be changed and that people identifying with Islam should modify their behavior to conform with standard Sunnī teachings and eschew animist thinking and identification. Strategy and tactics differed however. The Muhammadiyah maintained that superstition, surviving Hindu practices and custom contrary to Islam should be eliminated.[103] The Nahdlatul Ulama and Perti urged the elimination of practices conflicting with clear Islamic commands and prohibitions. The generally accepted Muslim mystical orders operating in Indonesia, particularly the Naqshabandiyah, condemned many Indonesian mystical practices as heretical. This consensus existed only in theory, but hardly in practice, for the traditionalists and the mystics were often tolerant of heterodox religious behavior, believing that such practices would disappear as the population became more

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[102] Steenbrink, *Pesantren*, 51–54.

[103] 'Ali, "Muhammadijah," 91, 126; K.H. Mas Mansur, *Risalah Tauhid dan Sjirik* (Surabaya, 1949).

aware of their religious obligations. Some traditionalist teachers believed that the inclusion of Islamic recitations and prayers purified many non-Islamic practices having a religious connotation.[104] The modernists, usually having less contact with the countryside where the mixture between Islam and animism was most apparent, were uncompromising toward customs and attitudes they saw as conflicting with Islam. Believing that tolerance by the traditionalists only diluted Islam and introduced innovation into religious practice, some modernists directed considerable criticism against the traditionalists.

The animistic practices that were under particular discussion during the 1920s and 1930s were the ritual meal, visiting the tombs of holy men for blessing, and use of magical practitioners. The ritual meal differed according to its purpose, but an underlying structure always included special ceremonial food, the burning of incense, the recitation of Islamic litanies and a speech in extra-formal language by the host. The custom appears to have some connection with ancient Javanese animism when it probably was a ceremony to propitiate spirits and ward off evil fortune. "*A slametan,*" stated C. Geertz, "can be given to almost any occurrence one wishes to celebrate, ameliorate or sanctify."[105] Birth, marriage, sorcery, death, house moving, bad dreams, harvest, name changing, opening a factory, illness, supplication of the village guardian spirit, circumcision, and starting off a political meeting may all occasion a *slametan.*[106]

This festival appears to have become confused and integrated with the celebratory feast which is mentioned in Shāfi'ī books of law in use in Indonesia, to be given at weddings and at other joyous occasions.[107] An important belief attached to this feast was that it gained religious merit for the host. The food took the form of a gift to the visitors, and, since several poor and destitute persons were generally invited, that portion of the feast given to them was considered to be alms. The religious merit accruing to the host was increased by the recitation of prayers, portions of the *Qur'ān* and Islamic recitations. The two forms of celebration became closely identified with

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[104] C. Snouck Hurgronje, *De Islam in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Baarn, 1913), 41–42; Hamka, Ayahku, 102–103.

[105] Geertz, *Religion,* 11–12.

[106] *Ibid.,* 11.

[107] The use of the terms *kanduri* and *slametan* are somewhat misleading since neither is Indonesian, but are derived from Arabic and Persian respectively. These two titles have, however, come to be attached to the practice of giving festive meals and replaced the older titles of *pesta* and *perdjamuan.*

one another and it was only on special religious occasions, such as in the celebration of the birthday of the prophet or at funerals, that the Shāfiʿī form of celebration was recognized and used.[108] In Sumatra this subject was of great interest, particularly among the Minangkabauis. The religious council at Palembang decided on December 23, 1929 that performing the "prompting" of the deceased for a dead person was permissible because the Prophet performed it. This of course, set off a reaction among the modernist Muslims of the region who opposed the practice.[109]

Saint worship involved visiting the tombs of men believed to have lived exemplary lives and have the blessing of God. In Indonesian Islam there are a panoply of such worthy persons: the nine *walis*, who were the first propagators of Islam on Java; important scholars, such as Syech Kuala who worked in Aceh in the seventeenth century; the tombs of kings, as at Solo or Demak; and important practitioners of mysticism who formed small communities throughout the archipelago, but especially on Java. The usual practice was to visit the tomb of a saint and make a vow to perform a certain deed if the saint would cause certain favorable events to come to pass. Incense, rice and flowers are taken to the tomb as an offering, and an Arabic incantation, often a portion of the *Qurʾān*, was recited—usually *juzʾ ʿamma*,—giving an Islamic flavor to the custom.[110] The pilgrim believed that he came away with the saint's blessing, which could play a beneficial role in the life of the pilgrim and in bringing his request to pass.

The focal point of the Indonesian belief in magic were the practitioners of magic who claimed to possess secret power and who performed a large variety of functions ranging from the treatment of illness with herbs and native medicine to the casting of spells for good and bad fortune.[111] They did not usually claim to be connected with Islam,—although some pointedly did,—and they seldom had

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[108] Hurgronje, *De Islam*, 31; Hurgronje, *Achehnese*, I, 215; "Kandoeri," *ENOI*, II, 265–6.

[109] *Sual-Djawab*, II, 14.

[110] Landon, *Southeast*, 155–156; Bousquet, *Introduction*, 202–207.

[111] There are various kinds of *dukuns*, bearing titles according to their sphere of activity and their manner of approach. There are midwives, masseurs, mediums, circumcisors, harvest-ritual specialists, wedding specialists, experts in numerical divination, sorcerers, specialists who cure by inserting golden needles under the skin, curers who rely on spells, curers who employ herbs and other native medicines, specialists in preventing natural misfortune, and curers whose powers are temporary and result of their having been entered by a spirit. Geertz, *Religion*, 86–87.

any contact with traditionalist religious officials; yet they did not exclude the use of Arabic phrases and terminology from their ritual and mystical formulae. This inclusion of religious terminology led many persons to believe, and many others to rationalize, that the magic practiced by practitioners did indeed have some connection with religion.

In the 1930s the Muhammadiyah and the Persatuan Islam both undertook major campaigns to address the behavior of Muslims in the regions where they were active.[112] Traditionalist Muslim teachers in rural areas of Java and elsewhere sometimes undertook similar campaigns, but on a much smaller scale. The major thrust of the campaigns was to stimulate Muslims to be more attentive to the standard obligations of Islam—prayer, fasting, giving to the poor, observing holy days and attempting to lead lives in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet. A lesser theme, but still important in the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam campaigns was the attempt to lessen the use of these practices connected with animism. The immediate success of the effort was not particularly noticeable, but a strong beginning was made that was continued over the next seventy years, so that the observer can see that such rites have diminished significantly, in part due to the work of modernist organizations, and in part to the shift in societal values that accompanied economic modernization.

4. *The Social Place of Women*

One of the most noticed social developments at the time was the increased role women came to play in Western society, a trend that was still in its infancy. It was a development that caused considerable thought among some Muslim women's groups and some Muslim divines, and prompted the publication of new studies outlining Muslim views toward the role of women in society.[113] In Indonesia, the Muslim attitude became a point of serious contention in the 1930's between nationalists, who advocated greater matrimonial and social freedom for women, and Muslims, who saw many aspects of the emancipation of women as transgressing religious prohibitions.[114]

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[112] Mansur, *Tauhid*, 16–21, 43–61; Achmad Jainuri, "The Concept of Modern *Tajdid* in Modern Indonesia and its Application in the Social Reform of the Muhammadiyah." Ph.D. dissertation submitted to McGill University, 1995, 53–57.

[113] Cf., Adams, *Islam*, 230–239; Smith, *Islam*, 62–79.

[114] J.Th. Petrus Blumberger, "Vrouwenbeweging (Inlandsch)," *ENOI*, VI, 451–455.

While most advocates for a less inhibited role for women in society belonged to nationalist organizations, there were those within the Muslim community who also wanted to grant women a more prominent role in social life than they had enjoyed earlier. This trend was apparent, for example, in the Muhammadijah where the 'Aisijah, the organization's women's movement, made a positive impact on Muhammadijah leadership and considerably broadened the role of women members within the organization.[115] Much of that effort was centered on women undertaking wider social roles—welfare assistance, orphanage work, health service among other women,—which had not been at all organized or prominent earlier. Significantly the new activities gave women an important field of activity beyond the confines of the family that were considered religiously legitimate for women to undertake. At the same time the new arena of activity did not much impact the areas of activity dominated by men, which were considered to be sanctioned by religion.

The Muslim practice of polygyny was also a target of the nationalists in the late colonial era. In 1930 the Isteri Sedar (Conscious Womanhood movement), under nationalist sponsorship, was founded, with a program specifically attacking "polygamy, child marriages, and prostitution."[116] While Muslim women's groups agreed with large parts of that program, few would accept the general condemnation of polygyny the program called for, and instead felt forced to defend the standard Islamic belief on the subject. For example, in 1929 the Muhammadiyah's woman's organization 'Aisijah maintained that polygyny was beneficial in that it had proven successful in preventing the increase of prostitution.[117] Instead it was suggested that there were other societal practices involving women not protected by Islamic doctrine that could be reformed, such as concubinage, temporary marriages, and other forms of sexual union that evaded the essence of real marriage according to standard Shāfi'ite regulations. Several Muslim women's organizations even went so far as to maintain that while polygyny was sanctioned by religion, monogamy was better suited to most Muslims because of economic necessity.[118]

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[115] Blumberger, "Moehammadijah," 270; James L. Peacock, *Purifying the Faith: The Muhammadijah Movement in Indonesian Islam* (Tempe, 1978), 38.

[116] Vandenbosch, *Indies*, 338.

[117] Blumberger, "Moehammadijah," 270.

[118] Blumberger, "Vrouwenbeweging," 454.

In large part the debate concerning the status of women centered on differences between nationalists and Muslims regarding modernization and attempts at creating a new "Indonesian" society. The nationalists regarded monogamy as an ideal because it was the form of gender relationship practiced in the nations of the West that appeared to be so successful at the time. Muslims ideals were based on earlier Islamic history, which clearly differentiated the roles of men and women and also countenanced polygyny, antedating and including the era of the Prophet Muḥammad. Moreover, the practice was permitted in the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*, the primary sources of religion. So it was natural that in the debates on the issue of the time that Muslim responses should usually center on the nationalist's "imitation" of the West rather than any great concern for the women of Indonesia "They who are afflicted with Westernism," a writer in *Islamic Defender* stated, do not understand that polygyny "is confirmed by Islam," and that the matter was not subject to debate or change.[119] Another article sought to counter nationalist statements that polygyny was open to abuse by stating that many other situations were also open to abuse as well. "We confess," the article ran, "that polygamy is a danger, like a knife in the hand of a housewife in the kitchen," but that in itself is little enough reason for stopping polygamy, or "removing the knife from the kitchen."[120]

5. *Aftermath—The Japanese Occupation (1942 to 1945)*

The Japanese occupation, from February 1942 until August 1945, was a turning point in the history of Indonesia. As a time-span it was a transition period which marked the end of Dutch control over the archipelago for all practical purposes, and offered Indonesians the opportunity to declare national independence and begin the final effort necessary to attain it. In one sense, however, it was the exchange of one foreign occupation by another and Indonesians discovered quickly that any hopes they had of receiving independence or autonomy from the Japanese were mistaken. Immediately upon occupying Indonesia, the Japanese interned all Dutch and other European peoples still there, installed military rule, and began a severe campaign of mobilizing the population and resources of the Indies to support Japan's efforts in the Pacific War against the United States

[119] *Pembela Islam*, 55 (December 1932), 9.
[120] *Pembela Islam*, 55 (December 1932), 11.

and its allies. As part of its mobilization the Japanese administration banned all political and religious organizations, put in effect plans for production of goods for the war that badly skewed the economy, and imprisoned those people it believed were not fully cooperative with Japanese rule. Finally, the Indies were divided into three zones: Sumatra and the Riau Islands were governed from Singapore along with the Malayan Peninsula by a Japanese army; later that headquarters was moved to Sumatra itself. The Outer Islands to the East came under the control of the Japanese navy, while the heartland of Java was ruled by army personnel at Batavia. In general the governing authority in the navy zone in the East was stern, with little effort to promote civilian political interests. In Sumatra the situation was more tolerant concerning production goals, but was slow in allowing local political advancement. On Java, with time, the political groups there were able to obtain concessions from the Japanese and to begin a new drive for political independence.[121]

Japanese authorities utilized the administrative organization structured by the Dutch. Local sultans and their administrators were pressured to sign new agreements with the Japanese officials, but thereafter were utilized in much the same way as the Dutch used local rulers, leaving them to implement policy in the established fashion. In Batavia, now renamed Jakarta, the Dutch administrators were interned and Japanese officials took their place. Two new policies, with attendant administrations, were introduced which had a decided impact on the society. The first was introduction of the Agricultural Industries Control Board which placed high quotas on the production of goods and the operation of the plantations in order to provide the supplies of quinine, rubber, petroleum, fiber, and some foodstuffs that the Japanese war effort required. Alongside this agency the use of the corvee was expanded for conscripting labor for army auxiliaries, security units, air raid security groups and general construction details. In general, as a result of these policies, which raised the demand for production but took men out of production, the economy declined steadily over the four year occupation, down in most areas by 25% and in some areas by 75%.[122]

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[121] Okuma Memoral, *Indonesia ni Okeru Nihon Gunsei no Kenkyu* (Tokyo, 1959), 226–244; Anthony Reid, *The National Revolution 1945–1950*, 13; Jan Pluvier, *South-East Asia: From Colonialism to Independence* (Kuala Lumpur, 1974), 330–333.

[122] Charles Wolf, Jr., *The Indonesia Story* (New York, 1948), 7; Reid, *Revolution*, 16.

In the second year of Occupation the Japanese introduced the Poetra (Central Peoples' Power), an umbrella organization which pulled together the remnants of earlier political parties, mass organizations and labor unions. This grouping was used as a mobilizing tool for Indonesian affairs and was overseen by a quadumvirate of political figures from the previous era—Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta, Hadji Mansur and Ki Hadjar Dewontoro. Allowing Indonesian autonomy within its organization, Poetra served the Japanese interest generally and the Indonesian interests specifically. It was instrumental in forming new militia and police units, carried on general indoctrination and propaganda activities, and generally performed mobilization activities the Japanese wanted undertaken. At the same time Poetra also allowed many Indonesians to gain administrative experience that was to become one source of vital personnel for the next period when Indonesia set up the Republic of Indonesia. In addition, the various meetings and propaganda activities were also used as opportunities to revive ideas concerning eventual political independence and military training, providing one important source for future military personnel.[123]

By 1944 the Indonesian leaders were successful enough in their relations with the Japanese authorities that they were able to form a committee to prepare for Indonesian independence—presumably still under ultimate Japanese control, which finally met in early 1945. The meetings of the committee held throughout the summer months won concessions from the Japanese on conscripted labor issues and lessening demands for supplying materials for the war effort. Importantly, the committee discussed the future shape of the Indonesian government, even agreeing on a constitution, with the long-lasting *Pancasila* or "Five Principles" of Indonesian nationhood enshrined in it.[124]

In the initial stages of occupation Japanese efforts to forge respect by Indonesians for the Japanese imperial system ran afoul of Muslim sensitivities. Japanese administrators tried to enforce the custom of bowing to the emperor (*sei kierei*), at public events and in the workplace in the morning. The traditionalist Javanese Muslim leader Hasjim Ash'ari was jailed for a short time in 1942 for being outspoken about the inappropriateness of this ceremony for Muslims.

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[123] Wolf, *Indonesia*, 8; Pluvier, *South-East*, 219.

[124] Endang Saifuddin Anshari, *Piagam Jakarta 22 June 1945* (Bandung, 1981), 31–59; Pluvier, *South-East*, 351–355.

In the same year Hadji Abdulkarim Amrullah, a prominent modernist from Sumatra, sent a tract to the Japanese director of religious affairs on Java condemning the custom of bowing as contrary to established Islamic practice,[125] and, at a subsequent conference of religious scholars held by the Japanese, refused to perform this ritual obeisance.[126] After several of these incidents the Japanese authorities backed down from use of the ceremony in order to avoid further collisions with the Muslims.

The Japanese resurrected several old organizations and created several new ones as another way of mobilizing Muslims. In late 1942, the unity council MIAI was re-established to coordinate the activities of the religious scholars. It was allowed to publish a monthly magazine, titled *Voice of MIAI*, hold indoctrination sessions, and sponsor speaking tours for improving popular feeling regarding the Japanese and their war efforts. Over the next two years four other religious organizations—the Muhammadijah, the Nahdlatul Ulama, the Serikatan Oemmat Islam of Madjalengka and the Persatoean Oemmat Islam Indonesia—were allowed to resume activity.[127] Later MIAI was disbanded for another Muslim unity organization named Masjoemi, which was a fresh mobilization scheme intended to draw in the Muslim organizations more fully than MIAI did, but with much the same duties and obligations. H. Benda claims that there was considerable cynicism about Japanese aims among all Indonesians working in organizations such as MIAI and Masjoemi, and that the pro-Japanese content of the message in these efforts was very muted and the theme of eventual independence was revived. He cites indoctrination efforts as an example of this duplicity. In the meetings held by Masjoemi, discussions of Islamic beliefs tended to play down—and often contradict—much of the Japanese public teaching and propaganda, particularly the doctrines of chosen race and the divinity of the emperor. Cadre training and indoctrination sessions actually served as an instrument for anti-Japanese activity.[128] M. Sya'roni, in his study of MIAI, contends that Muslims insisted on the formation of the Muslim paramilitary units, Hizbullah and Sabillah, in

[125] Hamka, *Ajahku*, 183–186.
[126] Benda, *Crescent*, 130.
[127] *Ibid.*, 116; Pluvier, *South-East*, 221–222.
[128] Benda, *Crescent*, 135; see also Deliar Noer, *Partai Islam di Pentas Nasional 1945–1965* (Jakarta, 1980), 25–27.

order to match the formation of similar units among nationalist youth and to prepare for the time when they might be needed to fight the Japanese. MIAI and Masjoemi also continued the work laid down before the Japanese Occupation with *Baitul Mal* (the Islamic Welfare Organization), which involved the collection of the poor tax on a systematic basis and the distribution of those funds to those families that were deemed poor enough to be considered recipients for such funds according to standards laid down in Muslim law.[129]

Muslims took part in Poetra and other Japanese efforts. One of the leaders of Poetra, S. Mansur, was from the Muhammadiyah organization. Kijai Hasyim Ash'ari, a founder of the Nahdlatul Ulama was prominent in the operation of MIAI and Masjoemi. Efforts were made in fact to keep the rural religious scholars from mobilizing the population and challenging the Japanese authorities, and this was generally accomplished. Numerous cadre from Muslim organizations, like their nationalist counterparts, found their way into the administrative structure of the Japanese administration and used those positions to learn more about the governing process and about practical problems of administration.

At the meetings for preparing independence differences between the nationalists and the Muslims arose concerning the role of Islam in the new state, a dispute that had, of course, been a source of severe disagreement in the preceding era.[130] Muslim activists on the committee, notably K.H. Mas Mansur, Abdulkahar Muzakkir and Agus Salim, prepared a document known as the Jakarta Charter[131] which placed the *Pancasila* (Five Principles concept)[132] in a framework acceptable to Muslims. The crucial portion of the Jakarta Charter stated that "With belief in Almighty God and motivated by noble wishes to live as an independent nation, the Indonesian people hereby declare their independence." While Sukarno, Hatta and

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[129] Syaroni, Mizan. "The MIAI: Its Role in the Indonesian Islamic and Nationalist Movement, 1937–1942." MA thesis submitted to McGill University, 1999.

[130] For accounts of the committee see Noer, *Partai*, 34–38; 032; Okuma, *Indonesia*, 418–428; Anderson, *Some Aspects of Indonesian Politics Under the Japanese Occupation 1944–1945* (Ithaca, 1961), 108–110.

[131] The Jakarta Charter (*Piagam Djakarta*) appears in Indonesian text in Osman Raliby, *Documenta Historica* (Jakarta, 1953), 489–494; in English translation in Wolf, *Indonesian*, 165–171.

[132] van der Kroef, *Indonesia*, 198–210; C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze, *Aspects of Islam in Post-Colonial Indonesia* (The Hague and Bandung, 1958), 180–243; Anshari, Piagam, 13–24.

several other nationalist leaders signed this document, and the major content of the Charter itself was incorporated into the preamble of the 1945 Constitution, the Preparatory Committee, with its predominantly nationalist membership, modified the crucial portion to read "With God's Blessing and moved by the high ideal of a free national life, the Indonesian people declare their Independence."[133] This change in reference to the Almighty was less than satisfactory to many Muslim leaders, who saw it as a nationalist attempt to undercut the Muslim position. This "rejection" of Islam was to become a point of complaint among activist Muslim groups for the remainder of the century.

[133] *Ibid.*, 43.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FOUNDING OF THE PERSATUAN ISLAM; ITS FIRST ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES

A. *Beginnings*

The Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union—Persis) was founded formally on September 12, 1923 in Bandung by a group of Muslims interested in religious study and activity.[1] The founding of the association grew out of an effort by several Muslims to enlarge discussions on religious topics that had been undertaken on an informal basis for several months. The Muslims involved in these discussions all belonged to the merchant class, and came from three family groups that two generations earlier had migrated, for reasons of trade, from the Palembang region on Sumatra to the West Java area where they had come to regard themselves as Sundanese, the dominant ethnic group in the West Java region. The two leading figures in these discussions were Hadji Zamzam and Hadji Muhammad Junus. Hadji Zamzam had spent three and a half years studying in the Middle East and then had been a teacher at the Darul Muta'allimun religious school in Bandung about 1910. Muhammad Junus, a merchant, was interested in religious matters and had collected a small library of works on Islam.[2] Here, of course, we see the importance of the Muslim trading and business groups as carriers and promoters of Islam, as the discussion in the introductory chapter pointed out.

The discussions that led to the founding of the Persatuan Islam centered on the reformist ideas that were then enjoying considerable popularity on Sumatra, with some following on Java, and on the conflict of these new ideas with the established religious system. The study group discussed the contents of *The Beacon*, (*Al-Manar*)[3] the mod-

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[1] Netherlands Department van Kolonien, *Indische Verslag* (The Hague, 1930), 310–311.

[2] Deliar Noer, "The Rise and Development of the Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia during the Dutch Colonial Period (1900–1942)." Ph.D. dissertation presented to Cornell University, 1963, 132–134.

[3] Adams, *Islam*, 180–187.

ernist Muslim publication printed in Cairo, and *The Ray (Al-Munir)*,[4] a periodical of similar bent published in Padang by Indonesian religious scholars who had studied in Makkah. We see here the slow spread of modernist Muslim thought throughout Southeast Asia, for it was already established by 1910 in Minangkabau on Sumatra and in Singapore, and yet in Java in the mid-1920's it is seen as a fresh and novel approach to the understanding of Islam. The group also followed the debate between Al-Irsyad and the Djamijat Chair, the principal organizations for Arabs resident in Indonesia, concerning status of Arabs among non-Arab Muslims; we have already discussed how the Arabs had gained an elite position among Indonesians on the basis of their identity with the Prophet Muḥammad, and that concept was under some attack at the time. The issues of strategy to be used in gaining concessions from the Dutch, the communist infiltration of the Sarekat Islam, and Muslim efforts to remove communist influence from that Muslim political movement also came under discussion.[5] This last point is hardly surprising since the Bandung branch of the Sarekat Islam was committed to the leadership of Cokroaminoto and Agus Salim, who did not favor a militant confrontation with the Dutch at that time, as opposed to the branch in Semarang, dominated by leftists, that favored and undertook such confrontation. Consequently, we see that at this formative period in the association, issues were already in existence and the study group members were doing what was fairly common in beginning a new association to study and address such issues.

Initial membership in the Persatuan Islam was less than twenty persons, and in the early years activity centered about Friday community prayer when the members came together and on courses of religious instruction given by several Persis members.[6] The only requirement for membership during this early period was an interest in religion, and Muslims representing both the modernist and traditionalist points of view originally were listed among its members. Prior to 1926, the Persatuan Islam did not espouse modernist principles as an organization, but in keeping with its mixed membership promoted the study of Islam in general terms.[7] There seems

[4] Hamka, *Ajahku*, 73, 86.
[5] 'Ali, "Muhammadijah," 49.
[6] Noer, "Rise," 134.
[7] Netherlands, *Indische*, 311.

to have been an inclination on the part of Hadji Zamzam and others to promote modernist Muslim ideas, and eventually there was resentment by those members favoring a traditionalist viewpoint about the movement of the discussion toward modernist interpretations.

It was at this point that Ahmad Hassan began to attend the sessions. He was of Tamil ancestry, born in Singapore, who had come to Java to establish a business in cloth manufacture and trading, but had considerable training in Islamic sciences. His thinking about Islamic matters was fairly developed as a result of working on *Malay Messenger (Utusan Melayu)*, an influential Malay-language newspaper in Singapore. As a result of discussions with a religious scholar in Surabaya immediately before arrival in Bandung, he was persuaded that his position on Islamic thinking should reflect that of the modernist position. This orientation came to be generally accepted by a large segment of the study group, but was not accepted by those members who held the schools of jurisprudence to be the chief guide for religious life. By 1926 the differences between the two trends within the discussion group were sufficiently great for a split to occur. The secessionist group, composed of the traditionalists, founded a rival organization known as the Permufakatan Islam (Islamic Association), while the rump group retained the name Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union) and declared itself to be a modernist Islamic movement.[8] The Permufakatan Islam either passed out of existence, or, more likely, was absorbed into the Nahdlatul Ulama which was founded about this same time.

The composition of Union membership shows a peculiar development in Indonesian Islam, i.e., the association of Muslim traders with religious studies and the role of immigrant Muslim communities in sponsoring religious institutions in their adopted cities. In this case the organization was founded by Sumatrans; and as it developed, it found its greatest support among the Sundanese. This was not unusual since both groups were closely connected with Islam as a point of identification. There were Javanese members, as the presence of chapters in Central Java indicates, but the initial membership drew first from non-Javanese Muslims, unlike the Muhammadiyah and the Sarekat Islam which organized heavily among Javanese

[8] *Ibid.*

Muslims.[9] Among members we have already identified Hadji Zamzam and Mahmud Yunus as Sumatrans, from Minangkabau; this was true of Moehammad Natsir as well. Also, as stated, Ahmad Hassan was a Tamil from Singapore. Among other members Abdurrahman, O. Qomaruddin and Sabirin were Sundanese, while A. Banaama and Al-Kahiri were from the Arab community. Consequently the membership was eclectic and represented people of diverse origins, where ideology and outlook appear to have been more important than racial solidarity.

B. *The Early Organization*

The statutes of the Persatuan Islam adopted after the split called for "furthering Islam on the basis of *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* of the Prophet" and for "the propagation and instruction of Islam.[10] Among Persatuan Islam leaders "furthering Islam" generally came to mean the consideration of contemporary issues, the examination of Islamic scriptures to determine appropriate Islamic positions, setting forth of a position on the basis of the examination, followed by instruction to the general Muslim public, through religious opinions, public debates, informational meetings and courses of instruction. These issues were wide ranging, from politics on one side, to proper religious ritual and behavior on the other, to how to react to groups outside Islam, such as the Christians. Over time, certainly by 1930, Persatuan Islam leaders came to regard themselves as a new brand of religious scholars whose efforts were designed to cleanse religion of unauthorized innovation and adapt religious principles to contemporary conditions; they took this role very seriously.

This was a unique role that the founders ultimately chose for the new association, although the members may not have intended it as such initially. The major religious-oriented associations existing in this period did not give their major attention to determining what the proper interpretation of Islam should be for the contemporary scene, although certainly their charters and statements indicated some intent to promote good standards in promoting their Muslim

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[9] Dadan Wildan, *Sejarah Perjuangan Persatuan Islam* (Bandung, 1995), 31; Endang Saifuddin Anshari and Syafiq Mughni, *A Hassan: Wajah dan Wijhah Seorang Mujtahid* (Bandung, 1985), 13.

[10] Mobini-Kesheh, *Hadrami*, 52–70.

identity. Still none of them were deep into exploring the doctrine and practice of Islam in the way the Persatuan Islam chose to do. Al-Irsyad, with a similar modernist Muslim outlook, was an Arab ethnic association, and was involved for years in the dissension within the Arab community over the question of Arab prerogatives in the Muslim community in Indonesia and whether their own nationalism was to be reflective of Middle Eastern origins or Indonesian residence.[11] The Muhammadiyah espoused modernist Muslim principles but, during the first twenty years, concentrated on developing Islamic teachings through educational and social welfare activities, and it was not until 1935 that much real attention was given to the content and context of religious belief and behavior among its members.[12] The Sarekat Islam was always concerned with political activities and focused on Islamic identity, ritual and thinking within the boundaries of its normal politics and policy making. Moreover, all of these other organizations aimed at comparatively large groups of people, with a large lay membership not dedicated to the close examination of texts that the Persatuan Islam found so important.

There was in the Persatuan Islam little emphasis on expanding its membership, and prior to World War II, it remained a relatively small, loose-knit organization. D. Noer stated that the membership of the Persatuan Islam never rose above 300 at Bandung, but noted that it was popular there and by 1942 controlled six mosques in the city, each serving over 500 Muslims. A number of branches were established by sympathizers in various cities and towns, mostly in West and Central Java, and, according to Noer, the membership of the larger organization was less than a thousand persons.[13] While certainly a significant number of associates, the number was very small in relationship to the other organizations mentioned above, which numbered their followers in the thousands and even the tens of thousands. The local popularity enjoyed by the Persatuan Islam in some places appears to have centered on the religious education offered at its mosque, on its clear position regarding controversial issues, and on the social contact and entertainment offered by the many meetings, lectures and debates organized by the movement's activists. Consequently, the reputation of the Persatuan Islam lay less with its

[11] Van der Kroef, *Indonesia*, I, 257.

[12] Muhammadijah, *Kitab 40 Tahun Muhammadijah* (Jakarta, 1952), p. 32.

[13] Branches were established at Bogor, Jakarta, Leles, Banjarmasin, Surabaya, Malang, Bangil, Sibolga, Kotaradja and Gorontalo. Noer, "Rise," 134.

organizational accomplishments in education, buildings or organization, than it did with the creation of an *esprit d'corps*, a distinctive character, an outlook and an ideology that saw Islam as the very center of life with all matters directly dependent on that conviction.

Some activists belonging to the Persatuan Islam during this period were influential members of other religious, political and social organizations. Sabirin was a prominent member of the Sarekat Islam, holding the positions of chair of the Bandung chapter and co-chair of the Public Information Section.[14] Al-Kahiri was a teacher in an Arabic language school in Bandung and also a secondary leader in the Al-Irsyad chapter in that city. Moehammad Natsir belonged to the Jong Islamieten Bond.[15] Dutch reports in 1930 indicate that among the wider membership of the Persatuan Islam there was an even split between those who supported the Islamic-oriented Sarekat Islam and the nationalistic Partai Nasional Indonesia. This overlapping membership reflects the interrelationship of groups in the leading cities of Indonesia during this period and shows that Muslim activists often belonged to whatever organizations they found useful in advancing their religious, political, economic and social identity. The similarity of the religious viewpoints, and particularly the consensus on political matters, seems to indicate that these members took the Persis outlook with them to other organizations, and/or that it was that outlook which attracted them to the Persatuan Islam in the first place.

But that is not to say that all other organizations were anxious to have Persatuan Islam members associated with them, for Persatuan Islam activists were dedicated and outspoken regarding their views. In a very pointed example, Persatuan Islam members belonged, in the large part, to the Sarekat Islam, and the Sarekat Islam in the Bandung area was heavily financed by some of the same people who supported the Persatuan Islam.[16] In early 1932, however, a dispute emerged in the Bandung chapter of the Sarekat Islam, between the members belonging to the Persatuan Islam and its supporters on one side and the followers of Cokroaminoto's unity view on the other, over the question of differences in religious belief.[17] The Persatuan

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[14] *Pembela Islam*, 34 (September 1931), frontispiece.
[15] Atjeh, *Sejarah*, 80.
[16] Noer, "Rise," 390.
[17] See Persatuan Islam, *Boekoe Verslag Openbaar antara PSII dan kaoem foeroe* (Bandung, 1932).

Islam' position was that the decline of Islam's political power had been caused by Muslim neglect of religious principles and the weakening of those principles by innovation (*bid'ah*). Only by reestablishing these principles in their unaltered form could Islam regain its strength. Persis members believed that to this end, it was necessary that open discussion be allowed in Muslim political groups so that "innovation" could be revealed for what it was.[18] This stress on airing differences of opinion conflicted sharply with the view of Cokroaminoto, who believed that differences among Muslim groups, including those between traditionalists and modernists, created disunity and weakened Muslim political strength, thereby detracting from efforts against external threats to Islam.[19] By June 1932 the dispute had become sufficiently serious to threaten unity and weaken the leadership, and the Cokroaminoto group in the Bandung organization conducted a "clearing away," expelling a number of members who insisted on the Persatuan Islam viewpoint.[20] Several members of the Persatuan Islam, including Ahmad Hassan, Moehammad Natsir and Hadji Zamzam, were purged.[21] Several other members, including Sabirin, were not purged and continued to hold membership in both the Persatuan Islam and the Sarekat Islam.

Further, in keeping with the general culture of organization in Indonesia of the time, the association allowed a women's unit and a male youth unit to be organized. They had the respective titles of Persistri (Women of the Persatuan Islam) and Pemuda Persatuan Islam (Youth of the Persatuan Islam). These units allowed wives and boys to participate as auxiliaries to the work of the Persatuan Islam itself, while giving each group a measure of self-identification. These did not appear immediately, but only later, probably as informal groups in the early 1930's. It was only at the 1936 Union Conference that both units were formerly vested with formal rules of organization. Immediately after their formal establishment, both took up roles that directly supported the efforts of the Persatuan Islam, as we shall see below.

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[18] *Pembela Islam*, 41 (January 1932), 35; *Pembela Islam*, 47 (June 1932), i–ix.
[19] Amelz, *H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto: Hidup dan Perdjuangannja* (Djakarta, 1952), 49.
[20] Noer, "Rise," 391; *Pembela Islam*, 47 (June 1932), ii.
[21] *Ibid.*, 390.

It was mentioned above that the Persatuan Islam was a loosely structured organization during the nationalist era. It appears that members used the organization as a forum for discussion of issues, and also as a starting point for activities some members regarded as addressing the problems they confronted in the discussions. Much in the organization depended on individual and small group effort. This was certainly true in the area of education where efforts at establishing, first courses and later formal schools, shows this trend quite clearly. Even after the formal schools were established in the early 1930's, Ahmad Hassan had no qualms about bringing forth his own conception of an Islamic school and moving outside the general geographic region of the organization's activity. An equally telling example was the foundation of an "Islamic defense committee" by younger members of the association in 1929 which enlisted older members and started the magazine *Islamic Defender* (*Pembela Islam*). The editors of the magazine in turn expanded the concept by calling for the creation of "Islamic defense committees" throughout the country. The tie between the Persatuan Islam and defense committees was never formal, only associative, held together solely by the themes and directions of the *Islamic Defender* magazine. As well, the religious formulations of several members of the association, primarily Ahmad Hassan, Mohammed Munir and Mahmud Aziz, arose from their own interest and took on a meaning that, while certainly associated with the Persatuan Islam, transcended it and was much more connected with the authors themselves. But it was these activities taken as a whole which gave the Persatuan Islam its identity and its particular outlook on matters of Islamic faith.

Finally, the Persatuan Islam was not political itself, but it did not hinder its members from belonging to political organizations. We have seen above that, in fact, there was a close relationship between some members of the Persatuan Islam and the Sarekat Islam when it was still a substantial organization in the 1920's and early 1930's. With the loss of influence in the population that the Sarekat Islam experienced in the 1930's, new political efforts arose that attracted Union members equally as well. In particular, the rise of the Madjelisul Islamil A'laa Indonesia—MIAI (High Islamic Council of Indonesia) in the late 1930's, as umbrella organization of Muslim movements for achieving common Muslim goals, was interesting enough that the Persatuan Islam as an organization formally joined it. It happened

in 1937 with the specific intent to defend Islam against the attacks of outsiders, particularly Christians, and the Persatuan Islam remained a member until MIAI was dissolved by the Japanese in 1942.[22] During that time span it was called on in 1940 by the MIAI leadership to counter Christian attacks on the Prophet and Islam in general. Ahmad Hassan responded by publishing the book *Is Jesus a Prophet?* which put forward the standard Sunnī Muslim view that Jesus was a prophet, but not the "Son of God" and that Christians did not understand the truth of their own religion, much less that of Islam.

C. *Ideological Magazines*

The essence of ideological Islam was found in the publications of the movement, which were dedicated to the whole range of issues that the Persatuan Islam espoused. First, and in a very obvious manner, the ideological position of the organization was expressed and challenges to its opponents were put forward. There was a frankness in this expression of viewpoint that is unusually appealing, but sometimes hurtful to the feelings of others. Second, the magazines covered some of the activists' commentary concerning their investigations into religious doctrine and practice. Again there was a clearness and directness, and along with it an authoritative stance that undoubtedly impressed many lay readers. In general these magazines reflected well the mood and attention of the activists of the association, and gave them a reputation greater than their numbers, background or general position in the society of the time would have normally given them. The magazines were the backbone of that reputation.

The first regular periodical published by the Persatuan Islam, entitled *Islamic Defender*, which first appeared in 1929, had a circulation of about 2,000, and was formally licensed.[23] It was intended to be a bimonthly magazine, and during the six years it was published a total of 71 numbers was issued. Its circulation was largely among modernist groups, particularly those belonging to Al-Irsyad and the Muhammadiyah, but some went to the Malay-southern Thailand

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[22] Benda, *Crescent*, 115–119; Atjeh, *Sedjarah*, 311–319; U.S. Consulate General in Batavia, "Native Socio-Political Problems of the Netherlands," reported by Willard Galbraith (Batavia, 1941), 41–42.

[23] Netherlands, *Indische*, 310. Circulation figures in Noer, "Rise," 142–145.

region, to Minangkabau on Sumatra, to Kalimantan, and to Sulawesi, where other modernist groups were prominent. Articles appearing in *Islamic Defender* were written either by the members of the association or by other, prominent Muslims reflecting a viewpoint similar to that of the Persatuan Islam. The emphasis in *Islamic Defender* was on religious values as the means of regarding all other matters in life, so that proper observance of religious behavior and ritual in the lives of Muslims was of high importance, and the role of religion in the politics of the nationalist movement and in international affairs had obvious outcomes. The magazine lost its license to publish in 1935 for a strongly worded rebuttal against Christian writers in response to an article attacking Islam.[24]

In 1931, the magazine *The Legalist* (*Al-Fatwa*) was undertaken in addition to *Islamic Defender*. *The Legalist* consisted of reprints of articles from *Islamic Defender*, transliterated into Malay written in an adapted Arabic script, a method of writing widely used among Malays of Singapore and Malaya and by some groups in Indonesia. Twenty numbers of this monthly magazine were issued before it ceased publication in 1933. It had a readership of approximately 1,000 and was distributed on Sumatra, Kalimantan, and throughout Java. After 1935, with the closing of *Islamic Defender*, the Persatuan Islam issued a new magazine named *The Voice* (*Al-Lisan*). The preface of the opening issue in December 1935 stated that the new magazine was to be a continuation of *Islamic Defender* and *The Legalist*, but would attempt to develop new materials as well; in practice it differed little from its predecessors.[25] The periodical continued to appear until the beginning of 1942 when the Japanese Occupation brought an end to nearly all publishing by Indonesian groups and associations. Beginning in 1937 and continuing through 1941, the Bandung branch published a periodical entitled *Devotion (At-Taqwa)*, a Sundanese language publication. This was a collection of articles from *Islamic Defender* and *The Voice*, but laid special stress on removing Hindu and pagan observances from Indonesian Muslim religious life.[26] *Devotion* had a circulation of 1,000.

Most of these magazines followed the general format set in *Islamic Defender*, which reflected the normative Islamic position of the activists.

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[24] Atjeh, *Sedjarah*, 221.
[25] *Al-Lisan*, 1 (December 1935), 1.
[26] Interview with Junus Anis, July 21, 1963.

Consequently, there were there were three parts to Persis publications: general articles, short ideological statements, and the question-answer section. General articles came from both within and outside the organization. Not infrequently members of organization would present summaries or analyses of contemporary conditions affecting the Muslim community of Indonesia. An example of this was a 1931 article by Sabirin in *Islamic Defender* titled "Hijrah" in which he reviewed the non-cooperation policy of Gandhi towards British authority in India and the relevance of that approach to the Muslims of Indonesia; he was open to Gandhi's aims, but questioned use of that particular tactic in Indonesia just then.[27] At other times there were articles from outsiders, such as in a 1931 article in *Islamic Defender* by the well regarded Sumatran writer Dr. Hamka, then in Medan, writing about the importance of Islamic unity to the welfare of Muslims for both political and religious purposes.[28] Further, there were often articles that spoke to controversies in which the members of the Persatuan Islam had direct interest, such as a series of articles in *Islamic Defender* in which the issue of special status for people claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad were discussed. The author was against special titles in Islam as violating the principles of equality of believers. Another discussed the attitudes of Christians in Indonesia and their statements about Islam and the Prophet Muḥammad, which were regarded by *Islamic Defender* editors (and the Muslim community in general) as provoking and libelous. This particular response stated that Christians were wrong in their views of the prophet and Islam, and equally wrong about the very nature of their own religion's founder, who was a prophet, not a part of the godhead. The articles in *Islamic Defender* were seldom neutral in position or in argumentation, always presenting views that fit with the organization's own ideological positions.

The second section of the periodicals consisted of short, often pithy expressions of ideological position, usually signed by a set of initials or a pseudonym. The most famous set of statements consisted of those signed with the initials M.S., which expressed strong, anti-Dutch, anti-nationalist, anti-sayyid, and anti-traditionalist attitudes.[29] For example, M.S. was signed to an article in 1931 regarding the

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[27] *Pembela Islam* 29 (July 1931), 17–19.
[28] *Pembela Islam* 34 (September 1931), 2–7.
[29] Collected in Persatuan Islam, *Kitab Pepetah* (Bandung, n.d.), 2v.

subject of nationalist attitudes toward religion, in which the editorial position of superiority of Islamic identification vis-à-vis nationalist goals was asserted. The statement read: "[Previously] the nationalists did not ever mention Islam, its movements or even its shortcomings... but now there is frequent use of... Islamic matters.... [apparently for ulterior motives of attracting Muslims]. We hope Islam will no longer be used as an instrument for gaining freedom, but rather that freedom will be attained for Islam."[30] The initials appear to have been an editorial convenience for staff writers when speaking for the magazine and its ideology rather than personally. The device gave some degree of anonymity, although there was speculation among the readers about the actual identification of the person using those initials. Early on some observers believed those initials referred to Sabirin, while later thinking suspected Ahmad Hassan. In fact, much was made of the initials later on which exaggerated the strength of the material to which the signature was applied. N. Dusky, for example, writing in the 1950's, asserted that Ahmad Hassan used the initials to be frank in his political assessments, which he could not have done had he signed his own initials or name. This may have been a reason, but it seems unlikely, since the essence of M.S. material was hardly different in tone than that of Ahmad Hassan, Sabirin, Hadji Zamzam or any other of the editors. It was simply the style that was unique, one that emphasized terseness and pithy expression, and it appears merely to have been a convenient device to impart editorial summation of the thrust of the magazine's principal arguments. Other sets of initials were used periodically, such X. Y. & Z., used in the early 1930's for a particular set of remarks, but M.S. had the most staying power.

Another editorial signature was that of "Si Goblok," i.e., "Dummy" which was used to present ironical statements or assigned to remarks that were highly disingenuous and frank in political or ideological terms. Si Goblok was anything but stupid, of course, and the essence of the short columns above the signature were usually insightful and often clever. Articles signed with this signature were usually somewhat longer than that of M.S., but the use of irony was much the same. An example of a shorter Si Goblok article appeared in the early 1930's on the sense of mission modernist Muslims felt about

[30] *Pembela Islam*, 56 (December 1932), 6.

their interpretation of Islam vis-à-vis the traditionalist interpreters. One key to that argument, as we shall see in a later chapter, centered on the modernist contention that many traditionalist justifications for disputed matters of worship and behavior hinged on faulty interpretation and acceptance of wrong premises in argumentation, which the modernists labeled as "innovation." The writer tied *Islamic Defender's* insistence on addressing this issue in with criticisms against the *Islamic Defender* itself as promoting dissension among Muslims with the Prophet Muḥammad's own message when he badly split the Arab community in Makkah to assert how wrong society of that time was. In his conclusion the writer signing Si Goblok asserts that "If we combat innovation which is clearly forbidden by Allāh and the Prophet and clearly causes the destruction of Islam, several Muslim leaders make accusations and propaganda charging that we are splitting the community . . . If splitting of this type is wrong, then the Prophet Muḥammad was the greatest splitter of all![31]

In addition to these short, vigorous notes signed by M.S., Si Goblok and other names, letters were often printed which challenged opponents to public debate and which were polemic in themselves. This sort of polemic was well illustrated in the letter from the Comite Islam Surabaja (Islamic Committee of Surabaya) challenging Pastor ten Berge to public debate because he printed an article containing uncomplimentary remarks about the Prophet Muḥammad. "From these words it is clear that you have a confused viewpoint concerning our reverence of the Prophet Muḥammad . . ., or, otherwise you obviously intend deliberately to speak slander and hatred toward our Religion."[32] While this particular epistle was from an another Muslim group, *Islamic Defender* did support its work in defending Islam against attack from hostile Christian groups and accordingly the gist of the letter fit nicely with the editorial themes of the magazine.

The third part of the contents of these magazines was the "question-answer" or "query-resolution" section, in which one member of the editorial staff, usually Ahmad Hassan, but sometimes Hadji Mahmud ʿAziz or some other person, answered the questions of readers on matters of religious importance, ranging from ritual worship to social and political behavior. Where the first two sections of

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[31] *Pembela Islam*, 29 (July 1931), 9.
[32] *Pembela Islam*, 32 (August 1931), 27.

the magazine were intended to promote an atmosphere or theme of the importance of Islam in the lives and actions of believers, this section was designed to be a guide to proper religious belief and behavior, not based on the feelings of the moment or trends of the time, but in line with the scriptures of Islam. Here the contributors did not function simply as writers, but as learned scholars seeking to apply the lessons of Islam to contemporary problems. It was really the old practice of issuing a fatwā or religious opinion, since religious sources were used as the basis for the decision. The sources, of course, were chosen in accordance with the modernist Muslim position that only the *Qur'ān* itself and the highest category of the *Ḥadīth* were valid, which allowed these writers to draw different conclusions than had earlier been done by traditionalist scholars addressing similar questions. But too much should not be made of differences in sources between the Persatuan Islam and traditionalists, for teachings concerning religious ritual were not very much different at all, while matters where difference existed often rested with a viewpoint that let sources be interpreted in particular ways. We will discuss this much more in the next chapter.

The format of the decisions in the question- answer section was straight-forward. The question was stated, then all of the religious sources employed were written out, first in Arabic and then, after the interjection of the expression "its meaning," translated into Indonesian. Finally, the opinion of the writer was expressed. Quotation from religious sources was intended to encourage the reader to study the origin if he was able, and to indicate the original reference, free of translation difficulties. This question-answer section was not a unique development since similar columns appeared in several other Muslim periodicals of that period. The Persatuan Islam probably developed this form of writing more fully than other groups did, however, and increasing emphasis was placed on these religious decisions as time passed, even to the lessened use of other forms of writing. Readers' letters to *Islamic Defender* indicate that the question-answer section was well read, and apparently in response to a demand for such decisions, a large number of those opinions was published in a multi-volumed collection throughout the 1930's under the collective title of *Query-Resolution (Sual-Djawab)*.[33] Even in 1998 *Query-Resolution*

[33] *Sual-Djawab*, 15 v.

was still a good seller and could be found on the bookshelves of most leading bookstores dealing in Muslim materials, providing support for the view that the Persatuan Islam had a continuing influence on the development of Islam in Indonesia long after its heyday. A short 1933 selection is provided here to gain a flavor for the style employed in such decisions.

Gramophone

> Question: What is the law regarding the buying, owning and playing of a gramophone.
>
> Answer: Here it is necessary to recall that the laws of Islam are divided into two parts: those dealing with worship and those dealing with temporal matters. In matters of worship all is forbidden except what is commanded, that is, we may not perform something as worship unless it is commanded in the *Qur'ān* and the Way of the Prophet. Regarding temporal matters everything is permitted, unless it is specifically forbidden . . . [by *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*]. Since a gramophone is in the realm of temporal matters, then one may build, sell, own and listen to it.[34]

The publication of magazines to promote the viewpoint of the Persatuan Islam began in 1929 in the midst of controversy. It was done as a reaction to an unflattering speech about Muḥammad and Islam given by a Christian minister at a government sponsored school; among the audience were two students taking religious courses at the Persatuan Islam. Their reaction to the speech led to the foundation of an Islamic Defense Committee, which in turn decided that a magazine should be published to counter such attacks. To promote similar activity among other groups in Indonesia holding a like viewpoint, editorials appearing in *Islamic Defender* in 1930 urged that "Islamic defense" committees be set up throughout Indonesia to counter "threats to Islam."[35] Persis leadership apparently conceived these committees as being local clubs promoting the study of religion and defending modernist Muslim principles. It was noted in 1931 that "Islamic defense" committees agreed at formation to "reject threats to Islam from without and within, defend all groups based

[34] *Pembela Islam* 60 (September 4, 1933), 32.
[35] *Pembela Islam*, 31 (August 1931), 40.

on Islam and oppose all movements which disturb Islam." It was also stated that there was to be no headquarters or overarching organization, implying that the local organizations were left to organize, finance and operate themselves independently with considerable freedom to define just how they would defend Islam. There was a brief reference in the article about the Islamic Defense organization in Bandung taking the general lead in defining which threats were important at the time "defense of Islam" committees were initially founded, and occasional notices in *Islamic Defender* and *The Voice* gave brief information about them later on. For example, in 1931 branches appeared in Sigli, Atjeh and at Garut in Central Java. In Pekalongan during 1933 the "Islamic defense" committee there mounted a campaign against the annual visitation by hundreds of people to the tomb of Saiyyid Ahmad b. Abdullah al-Attas, a local saint, to gain the blessings believed to accrue to worshipers. The local committee opposed the visitations on the basis that prayers made there which were not in accord with standard Sunnī teachings and it was charged that such actions were akin to animism.[36]

The most important Islamic Defense Islam committee existed at Bandung itself and was actually an auxiliary of the Persatuan Islam and the *Islamic Defender* press. Still it was separately organized and may have drawn on a slightly different membership than the Persatuan Islam itself. Hadji Zamzam served as first chair of the committee and Sabirin was the secretary. It sought to bring about some cooperation among Islamic organizations in Bandung to coordinate observance of religious holidays, such as with the celebration of Prophet's Birthday in 1931.[37] Also in 1934 the Committee was responsible for organizing a debate with Ahmadiyah representatives, one of several to take place in Bandung with Persis members involved.[38] Further in 1931 the leaders of the committee met with the resident and regent at Bandung to discuss Pastor Ten Berge's public comments about the Prophet Muḥammad which were regarded as unfriendly and blasphemous in the eyes of Muslims. Later the committee sent a telegram to the Governor General protesting similar remarks made by the Christian missionary Dr. Kraemer.[39] Strikingly the telegram

[36] *Pembela Islam*, 61 (May 9, 1933), 23–27.
[37] *Pembela Islam*, 29 (July 1931), 36–37.
[38] *Pembela Islam*, 58 (September 2, 1933), 31–32.
[39] *Pembela Islam*, 31 (August 1931), 4.

was signed by both the Islamic Defense Committee and by the Persatuan Islam activists, giving the impression that two very separate organizations were involved. Obviously the *Islamic Defender* publication got considerable mileage out of its creation of these committees.

Magazines as a genre are meant to be immediately important and perishable in that they express views and attempt to shape attitiudes for the short run. They are serials for a good reason; because conditions change and a new issue is necessary to say what is now important and how the scene is to be understood. It is telling that the Persatuan Islam leaders found this medium so useful that it was used for nearly two decades to expound the Persis viewpoint, trying to stay current in the ongoing political events of the era. In this it was probably successful in stating and restating its convictions about the state of Islam in Indonesia against a changing backdrop of issues that a dynamic period naturally produces. When one reviews the issues of *Islamic Defender* and *The Voice*, the two major publications of the movement, they are dated in terms of the items of interest they are discussing at any particular time, and the reader must know historical context to understand much of what is being discussed or the significance of the discussion itself. But, what is not necessarily dated is the viewpoint toward committed Islam and the applications of religious sources to daily problems of Muslims. It can be argued that the reputation of the Persatuan Islam was due mostly to its early debates with opponents, as the next section of this chapter outlines, but the magazines were probably crucial in establishing that reputation in the first place. Moreover, the magazines serve as a historical record of that effort in a way that the records of the debates can not preserve. Ideological writing was important to this movement and heart of its purpose.

D. *Debates: Written, Private and Public*

If the magazines were the doctrinal center of the association, the formal debate was, for a time in the early 1930's, its chief activity. Here the activists challenged other individuals or groups harboring a view, approach or policy deemed inimical to that of the Persatuan Islam. Its members regarded this as "defending Islam" from "threats against it or calling its reputation into question." Consequently Persis members publicly challenged any individual or group they believed

misunderstood, misinterpreted or distorted proper religious belief and practice. Here we see all of the key points of the association's ideology outlined earlier come into play and attempts by Persis activists to identify the culprits who perpetuated views and actions preventing strong Muslim values from emerging. The debating took several different forms: some were discussions limited to members of competing groups or an invited audience, some were written exchanges, often appearing in the respective publications of the competing sides, while a small number were formal public debates with rules of contest and presiding officials.

The first type of debate, the private presentation, had limited use with the Persatuan Islam. We have only one real example here, that between the Persatuan Islam and Haji Muchtar Lutfti, representing the Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia—Permi (Indonesian Muslim Union), a group formed in Minangkabau, which was an early advocate of combining the views of Islam and Indonesian nationalism. The debate concerned the relationship of religious values vis-à-vis nationalist theories on law and government.[40] This occurred in 1933 when Permi representatives were in Bandung, with the debate held behind closed doors, apparently because it was a discussion between Muslim modernist movements who owed some consideration to one another and, apparently, neither group wanted a public airing of the issues at that point.[41]

The second type of debate, involving written exchanges, was held with the Indonesian nationalists who were led by Soetomo and Soekarno, but included a large number of other activists. The nationalists were challenged for refusing to recognize the political role of Islam and for rejecting religious law as capable of providing the principles for Indonesian society or a future Indonesian nation. That debate was long running and took place in the pages of *Islamic Defender* and *The Voice* on the side of the Persatuan Islam and through such newspapers as *Torch of Young Indonesia (Suluh Indonesia Muda)* and *Voice of the People (Fikiran Rakyat)* on the side of the nationalists. The editorial line, expressed primarily in the articles of Sabirin, Natsir and Fachruddin al-Kahiri, followed the viewpoint prevalent in the

[40] Wildan, *Sejarah*, 47.

[41] Djaja, *Pusaka*, 162; J. Th. Petrus Blumberger, "Persatoean Moeslimin Indonesia (PMI)," *ENOI*, VII, 348.

Sarekat Islam faction led by Hadji Agus Salim and Abdoel Muis, which accentuated the religious content of politics and stressed the importance of cooperation among all Muslims of the Middle East and Asia, i.e., Pan-Islamism. In these articles, the nationalists were attacked for insisting on law other than the Muslim sacred law and for limiting the independence movement to Indonesia and not seeking the independence of all Muslim peoples under colonial rule. In short, succinct and penetrating articles entitled "Freedom for what?," "Nationalism should not be involved," and similar titles, *Islamic Defender* attacked the nationalists on these two counts. Fachroeddin al-Kahiri's article appearing in *Islamic Defender* in 1933 summed up the attitude of Union activists very well. "So long as the Muslims of Indonesia consider Indonesian freedom as more important than the freedom of all Muslims, consider politics as more important than worship, . . . exchange obedience to the religious scholar for obedience to the [national] leader, . . . consider emotions more important than examination of substance, . . . and consider the enemies endangering Indonesian freedom more important than the enemies who endanger Islam, . . . so long will Indonesian freedom remain only a phrase on the lips."[42]

The advantage to a written debate was that it could be allowed to die down and then resuscitated at another juncture when tempers flared again over some incident prompting a fresh reaction. In June 1931 an editorial column appeared in *Islamic Defender* that did just that. The writer, using the initials M.S., alluded to newspaper reports appearing on May 8 and 9 concerning an open meeting of the Taman Siswa movement, attended by the nationalist leaders Ki Hadjar Dewantoro and Sukarno, where the principle of "nationalism as the basis for education" was undertaken. The word "nationalism" was a red flag for M.S. as it implied, at least when uttered by Sukarno or Dewantoro, the exclusion of Islamic values. It was only natural that a response should come from the Muslim side that was clear and strong. In a key part of the the response M.S. stated: "Earlier Engineer Sukarno did not want to take Islam as a basis for political activity because about 5 to 10 percent of the population are not Muslim, but now he wants to use nationalism—which is not wanted by 90 to 95 percent of the population who are Muslims.

[42] *Pembela Islam*, 59 (March 1933), 25.

This is extraordinary logic, not unlike the Christian logic of the Trinity where "one is three" and "three are one." It is not important whether M.S.'s statement was factually correct or not, rather what can be noted in this response by M.S. is that the ongoing debate between the two sides was renewed, both using the print media available to them for that purpose. The polemic between Muslims and the nationalists grew more intense as the era progressed and the issues of pilgrimage and polygamy, discussed in the opening part of this section, appear to have stimulated the reaction to one another when those issues came into public discussion. The debate was even continued in the form of a private correspondence between Ahmad Hassan and Sukarno after Sukarno was sent into internal exile in the Flores Islands in 1934. Hassan's part of that correspondence has apparently been totally lost, but Sukarno's replies became well-known as "Letters on Islam from Endeh," which saw virtue in Islamic modernization on secular patterns as was accomplished by Kemal Ataturk in Turkey during the 1920's and 1930's.

Not exactly fitting this category of "written debate," but akin to it—was a challenge by the Persatuan Islam, but with no formal replies on the part of those challenged—where differences with other modernist Muslims, in two cases with the prominent Amrullah family of West Sumatra. In the first case the father, Abdulkarim Amrullah, long recognized as a leading modernist Muslim on Sumatra, was challenged by Ahmad Hassan for a particular fatwā regarding women's attire,[43] which Hassan found badly flawed because of the conclusions drawn from the particular sources that were cited. In the second case the son, Hamka, was criticized for his novels *In the Shadow of the Ka'abah* and *Sinking of the Ship Van der Wyck* which were judged as indecent by Persis writers because those novels dealt lightly with religious subjects. In general the members of the Persatuan Islam were suspicious of novels, which they may have regarded as frivolous. They did, however, consider Moehammad Dimyatie's *Orphan* as a good novel, possibly because it dealt with the issue of independence and had been banned by the Dutch.[44] There were messages that flowed back and forth on both issues with some of the discussion

[43] Hamka, *Ajahku*, 167.

[44] Junus Anis Hamzah, *Hamka sebagai Pengarang* Roman (Jakarta, 1963); S.I. Poeradisastra, "Dalam Sastra pun Berdakwah dan Berkhotbah," in Nasir Tamara, ed., *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat* (Jakarta, 1983), 121–136.

appearing in journals in Bandung and at Padang and Medan. The challenges are especially interesting because both sides in this debate were modernist Muslims and the issues point out that there were points of divisiveness even here, which the Persatuan Islam was unable to overlook in the cause of common identity or for the sake of unity of voice.

The third category, formal public debate, presents us with the most graphic examples of Persis commitment to its doctrinal positions concerning Islam. Here there were four separate groups that were the targets of Persis action: traditionalist Muslims, the Ahmadiyah Qadiyan, hostile Christian groups, and groups espousing atheism. Traditionalist Muslim groups were attacked for adhering to classical jurisprudence in the face of modernist Muslim views that it was a flawed system, and for maintaining traditionalist views on some matters of ritual, such as the burial ceremony, which modernists regarded as pandering to pre-Islamic beliefs and practices. There were three debates with Nahdlatul Ulama activists, at Bandung, Cirebon and Gebang respectively, one debate with members of the *Ittihadul Islamiyah* (Islamic Guidance Organization) in Sukabumi, and at least two debates with the *Majelis Ahli Sunnah* (Legalists' Council) in Bandung.[45] All the debaters for the traditionalists were respected religious scholars, some of whom later became prominent in the Nahdlatul Ulama[46] In some of these cases the doctrine of "uncontested obedience" was debated, where the adherence of traditionalists to their pedigree of scholars was challenged as inconsistent with adherence to the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* as the mainsprings of Islamic doctrine. At other times the debates centered on traditionalist acceptance of popular practices, such as the "prompting" at the grave. Also connected with these debates, but somewhat different in context, was the participation of Persis members in a debate connected with the Sarekat Islam where the issue of differences of worship and observance were debated. Here the question also related to the views of the traditionalists that were inconsistent with those of the Persatuan Islam, but was centered much more on whether Persis members should pursue their own goals vis-à-vis traditionalists within an organization that tried to be a unity party for all Muslim groups in the East Indies. Sarekat

[45] Wildan, *Sejarah*, 46–7; Ockeloen, *Catalogus*, 115.

[46] They were Kiyai A. Sanusi for the Ittihadijatul Ulama and Haji Abdul Khair, Haji Abdul Wahab, A. Wahab Hasbullah and Haji Masduqi for the Nahdlatul Ulama.

Islam leadership wanted a truce within the organization, while some Persis members insisted on pursuing their ideological goals even there.

There were disputes with groups viewed as outside Islam. The Ahmadyah Qadiyan was challenged for its stand in maintaining that a prophet existed after Muḥammad, in sharp contradiction to Sunnī belief that Muḥammad was the last or "seal" of the prophets. There were two debates with the Ahmadiyah Qadiyan at Bandung and Batavia, both in 1933.[47] Christianity was strongly attacked because of the provocative statements made by Christian writers—Indonesian and foreign—in assailing the character of Muḥammad and questioning the validity of the *Qur'ān* There were at least three with the Seventh Day Adventists on Christian claims of divinity for Jesus. T. Djaja lists a debate between Ahmad Hassan and the Christian scholars Diernhuis, Eisink and X. Schoemaker, and makes reference to debates with "atheists" in Batavia and Malang.[48]

These topics were at the heart of the Persatuan Islam's view of the world and the groups with whom they debated were truly their adversaries. Little wonder then that the organization put so much of its effort into arranging the debates, publicizing them, and encouraging general discussion concerning the issues through their publishing and teaching efforts. Good-sized audiences attended these debates, probably because they were well publicized by the Persatuan Islam, and because the debates centered on controversial issues then drawing considerable public attention. For example, at one of its most successful debates, with representatives of the Ahmadiyah Qadiyan at Batavia in April 1933, some 2000 people attended, including a Dutch official from the Office of Internal Affairs, several reporters from leading newspapers and magazines, and representatives of a number of interested Islamic organizations from the West Java region.[49] While this was probably the largest of the debates, others drew hundreds of people. Ahmad Hassan usually represented the Persatuan Islam and proved effective in debate since he was able to formulate arguments using both religious texts and reason to refute the positions taken by Persis opponents. These debates, while of no real value in resolving the issues or reconciling the differences between

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[47] Pijper, *Studien*, 130–131; Ockeloen, *Catalogus*, 115.

[48] Wildan, *Sejarah*, 50–51; Noer, "Rise," 143–144; Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup A. Hassan* (Jakarta, 1980), 27–29.

[49] Wildan, *Sejarah*, 46–47.

the debating factions, mostly gave Persis activists an arena in which to propound their viewpoints, and the Persatuan Islam—and Ahmad Hassan in particular—gained a reputation for formulating lucid and cogent arguments in defense of modernist Muslim principles. The minutes of these debates were usually printed in *Islamic Defender* and *The Voice*, and several also appeared as separate publications. Of course the views of the Persatuan Islam probably received greater attention in the challenges than in the debates themselves, for the issues could be put succinctly in challenges, flyers and advertisements which drew much attention, while the debates themselves were unpredictable, sometimes missed the intentions of the organizers, or left issues hanging. After all the importance was in the issue, not the debate itself. The debate was simply a means to an end.

The debates were probably responsible for shaping much of the thought of Ahmad Hassan and for directing his publication of Islamic writings in certain directions. We know, for example, that the publication *Islam and Nationalism* in 1940 was the product of his long-running controversy with nationalist leaders and that the book on the role of Jesus ('Īsā) as a prophet, written in the late 1930's, was an attempt to give a definitive answer to the Christian attacks on Islam that was taking place throughout the decade. Significantly these works came long after these debates themselves, but still reflected much of the argumentation that took place in them.

E. *Preaching and Dissemination of Information*

In 1935 and 1936 Persis activists turned to the use of information sessions (*tablīgh*) as a means of bringing their message of reformist Islam to the attention of the Muslim community of West Java. In October and November 1935 it held two "grand information sessions" at its own facilities in Bandung where 700 and 500 people attended respectively. This was followed in 1936 with similar sessions in Bandung, Tanjung Priok, Garut, Bogor, and Cianjur on Java and at Kutaradja (now Banda Aceh) in Aceh. Attendance was often in the hundreds of people, with the highest attendance at the Empang Gang Abdoellah II Mosque in Batavia (700) and at Tanjung Priok (500). Usually, however, attendance was less, often between 50 and 100 people. The lists of participating members, provided by D. Wildan, shows that the leadership faction of the association was mostly in

attendance. He also gives us some of the division of labor; for example at a meeting in Bandung in 1935 the major speaker was K.H.M. Ramli who covered the donation to the poor, followed by O. Qomaruddin who spoke about fasting, followed by E. Abdurrahma who challenged the traditionalist research methodology, and K.H. Azhari who also dealt with fasting.[50] Overall, common matters of Islamic concern were the focus of the information sessions and, in addition to the subjects given immediately above, other discussions included the ascent of the prophet Muḥammad to heaven, the doctrine of unity, matters of general worship, early Muslim history and concepts of Islamic jurisprudence. Only occasionally were more ideological matters included, although a discussion of Ahmadiyah doctrine was discussed on one occasion, and we have already noted one presentation questioning traditionalist use of Islamic sources. However, it was axiomatic with Persis speakers that they spoke from the viewpoint of their belief system, so that the association's stress on *Qur'ān* and firm *Ḥadīth* as the proper sources of Islamic teachings came across strongly in the presentations, and, also, references were made to nationalism, Christianity and other matters that reflected the views of the activists.[51]

These "grand information sessions" (*tablīgh akbar*) were intended as the lead-in to further work by a much larger group of activists who were to be recruited and energized by these sessions. Both men and women were to be recruited to become lay advocates to carry the work further by speaking to small groups in society. To assist these lay advocates a handbook was prepared in 1935 for that use. The handbook began with a section on the principles of religion, followed with a section on the principles of Islamic law, followed by two sections on leadership according to Islam, followed by another section on the principles of belief, followed by another section on law used by Muslims to regulate their behavior, and concluding with a short selection from a legal compendium on the essence of marriage. We have limited information about the success of this effort to use a wider group of activists to spread the Persis message, but in 1937

[50] Wildan summarizes that group as including A. Hassan, Muhammad Yunus, Muhamad Zamzam, E. Abdurrahman, Fachruddin Al-Kahiri, K.H.M. Ramli, O. Qomaruddin, Abdul Razak, Abdulah Ahmad, Muhammad Ali, and H. Azhari. *Al-Lisan*, 1, (27 December 1935), 26 as cited in Wildan, *Sejarah*, p. 53.

[51] Wildan, *Sejarah*, 53–54.

the central board issued instructions to this group reminding them to teach according to the guidelines established by the association, carefully observe the content of the teachings, especially those concerning the importance of *Qur'ān* and firm *Ḥadīth* as religious sources, and also to carry on the effort in a peaceful, non-confrontational way. They were also reminded that there was a library at their disposal so that they could read into matters which they might have difficulty explaining. This set of instructions may indicate some concerns about the errors made by the lay activists, but it probably indicates as well that activity in this effort was proceeding and guidelines were there to give it proper direction.[52]

Alongside the "grand information sessions" the women's unit (Persistri), regularly offered "ordinary" information sessions every Monday for women and young females; about 50 people attended these sessions, often including women from other Islamic organizations. Speakers were both men and women. Discussion topics were similar to those employed in the "grand" sessions but modified for the female audience. As part of the Persis effort in 1935–36 the women also gave several "grand information sessions" of their own for women's groups, once in Batavia and twice in Bandung. Attendance at the Batavia meeting was 250 people. At the meeting in Batavia and the first meeting in Bandung the speakers were all women,[53] but the third meeting featured male speakers from among the leading activists of the Persatuan Islam. General thinking in the association—among both the Persatuan Islam's male and female leaders—was that women lay advocates were necessary to make sure that the message of modernist Islam would be spread throughout the female section of society, so there were ample recruiting efforts there as well as the more substantial effort among males.[54]

F. *Contributions to a Modernist Muslim Literature for Indonesia*

To this point in our discussion of the Persatuan Islam there has been continual mention of publication, either as a direct medium of prop-

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[52] *Ibid.*, 55–56.

[53] Nyonya Karsach, Nona Nurjanah, Nyonya Salha, Nyonya Bintang, Nyonya Dahniar, Nyonya Malehah, Nyonya Aliyah, and R.O. Hasanah. *Nona* indicates an unmarried woman, while *Nonya* indicates one who is married.

[54] *Ibid.*, 54–55.

agating the Persis viewpoint, as in the ideological magazines of *the Islamic Defender, The Speaker, The Legalist* and *Devotion*, or as an indirect medium in publishing the results of debates with adversaries and in the issuance of a guide in the grand information sessions.[55] In 1934 the short editorial remarks signed with M.S. and other initials were published in a two-volume anthology titled *Pithy Remarks*.[56] In 1937, *Islamic Protector* was published, consisting of a collection of leading articles from *Islamic Defender*, and two years later a similar collection of articles from *The Speaker* was issued under the title *Wisdom*.[57] The efforts put into the original contributions to *the Islamic Defender* and *The Speaker* apparently were considered sufficiently expressive that they could be recycled into several ancillary magazines and anthologies, bringing some economic benefit and clear reputation to the organization and its activists. These efforts and the follow-on publications constituted a large part of the publishing effort of the organization. In addition to periodical publications, the Persatuan Islam published pamphlets and short monographs by its own members and other Muslim groups and individuals. The motivation for such publications may have been slightly different than that of the ideological magazines in that these pamphlets and small books seem intended to provide basic information about Islam that could be used in information sessions and teaching situations. That is not to say that the publications were not at all ideological, for they certainly followed the basic intent of the Persatuan Islam in providing materials that were based on the *Qur'ān* and firm *Ḥadīth*.

The Persatuan Islam was operated for people who found it preferable to use the Indonesian language, for reasons of trade and to identify themselves with the groups that were seeking independence from Dutch rule. But the association was located in an Sundanese language zone and many people there used that language much more than Indonesian. Consequently Persis publications emphasized Malay/Indonesian, but also published in Sundanese. Usually Indonesian in Roman script was used, but in both Indonesian and Sundanese works Arab scripts were sometimes used, reflecting the usage at the time when both forms were common. Discounting the magazines

[55] *Pembela Islam, Al-Lisan, Al-Fatwaa*, and *At-Taqwa* respectively.
[56] Persatuan Islam, *Pepetah*.
[57] *Lasjkar Islam* and *Al-Hikam* respectively.

and records of debate cited earlier, the stress of the Persatuan Islam was on standard Islamic teachings.

Notable in almost all books published by the Persatuan Islam was the search for brevity and clarity. In the preface to *Unity of God*, for example, Ahmad Hassan stated that he would employ the "question-answer" method throughout the book "in order that . . . the reader will be able to understand, . . . and if . . . not . . . he will not be so bored as not to read it once or twice more."[58] Clarity was achieved by simple sentences, by defining all religious terms used in the discussion, and by avoiding time-consuming lateral problems. The result was usually a clear explanation of basic religious doctrine, comprehensible to the uninformed layman and student for whom Persatuan Islam publications were intended.

The first grouping of books dealt with proper belief. Here the leading book was *Unity of God*, which outlined major tenets of Islam according to the Sunnī Ash'arite tradition. A description of the contents is found in extended version in the next chapter. In this section can also be included a pamphlet by Sabirin originally appearing in the *Islamic Defender*, but later republished by another publisher in Bandung with the title *Fasting . . .*, which reflected concern for reconciling religion with contemporary scientific knowledge. Also, there was a series of sermons given at the Persatuan Islam mosque and on the high holy day of *Hari Raya*, contained in the books *Summaries of Sermons* and *Book on Friday Worship*, which outlined a Muslim's religious obligations and described proper religious behavior for the faithful.[59]

A second grouping of books dealt with Persis conceptions of Islamic law. The lead publication was *The Book of Jurisprudence named "The Proof"* which also had a Sundanese version titled *"The Proof." A Book of Jurisprudence in the Sundanese Language.* Ahmad Hassan was the original compiler, with Mohammad Anwar Sanuci and Mohammad Djoenaedi doing the translation and necessary editing for the Sundanese version.[60] This publication appeared first as a serial, gathering together important questions of Islamic law relating to worship, behavior and

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[58] Ahmad Hassan, *At-Tauhied* (Bangil, 1937) i–ii.

[59] *Ibid.*; Sabirin, *Poeasa, mengandoeng pendidikan hygiene . . ., physiek, . . . moreele discipline, psychologie* (Bandung, 1934); Persatuan Islam, *Ringkasan Choetbah* (Bandung, [1932]); Persatuan Islam, *Risalah Djoem'ah* (Bandung, 1931).

[60] Ahmad Hassan, *Al-Boerhan* (Bandung, 1933); M. Anwar Sanuci and M. Djoenaedi (trans.), *Al-Boer-Han: Kitab Fiqh Basa Soenda* (Bandung, 1934).

general religious procedure. Other books in this legal category dealt with worship and fulfilment of Islamic obligations. Ahmad Hassan prepared *Teachings Concerning Worship*, which was described as "a book clarifying the way of our Prophet in establishing prayer and other types of worship [with] clarifications taken from the *Qur'ān*. . . ."[61] A book with similar contents in Sundanese was published by Pendidikan Islam (The Islamic Education Body) with the title *The Correct Way*, for primary use in the elementary school it operated, but was also for sale to the general public.[62] There was a cooperative effort among Sabirin, Ahmad Hassan and Fachruddin Al-Kahiri in the preparation of *Book on the Islamic Poor Tax*. Abdullah Ahmad contributed *Translation of the Rites of Pilgrimage* which outlined how to undertake the rites connected with the pilgrimage to Mekka.[63]

The Persatuan Islam had little to say on economics, but did publish two books, *Book on Usury* and *Book of Reply to the Criticism of T. Soelaiman Thojib regarding "Book on Usury,"* to explain fully its own position regarding the question of interest and usury which came under considerable discussion among Muslims in the 1930's because of the introduction of banks, savings accounts, and insurance policies. An important book on general behavior was provided in *High Culture*, which was aimed at children and their parents on the subject of proper deportment of Muslims. Some books were written to urge reforms in contemporary religious practice Persis members regarded as wrong, such as those described in *Book of Prompting at the Grave according to Jurisprudence* which contained an outline of accepted burial practices and was aimed at refuting graveside practices widely in use, but opposed by modernist Muslim groups.[64]

A third grouping of books dealt with the *Qur'ān*. *The Criterion* ranks as the lead work here, since it was eventually to become one of the standard commentaries used by Indonesian Muslims for understanding the *Qur'ān* in the Indonesian language after independence. Prepared by Ahmad Hassan, it was issued in fascicles, of which 10 were issued

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[61] Ahmad Hassan, *Pengadjaran Shalat* (Bandung, 1935–1937), 4v; description from Ockeloen, *Catalogus*, 176.

[62] Pendidikan Islam, *Kafijatun-Salàh* (Bandung, 1933).

[63] Ahmad Hassan (et al.), Kitab Zakat (Bandung, 1934); Abdullah Ahmad, *Tadshiratoel Hoedjad* (Bandung, n.d.).

[64] Ahmad Hassan, *Risalah Pendjawab Debatan T. Soelaimin Thojib . . . terhadap Kitab Ribaa* (Bandung, 1936); Ahmad Hassan, *Kesopanan Tinggi* (Bandung, 1930); Ahmad Hassan, *Kitab Talqien orang wet* (Bandung, 1931).

up to 1938. M.H. Ramli translated the fascicles into Sundanese under the title of *Wisdom*. *The Criterion* was completed only in the 1940's and reedited several times thereafter, taking its place with a small group of other Indonesian commentaries in the late 1950's. It remained a staple in the field even in the 1990's. *Dictionary of Terms*, a short dictionary of Arabic terms in use in Malay, originally accompanied *The Criterion* as a word list, but ultimately was popular enough that it was published under a title of its own.[65] To facilitate the understanding of religious terms, Ahmad Hassan developed a transliteration system by which untranslatable Arabic religious terms could be assigned Indonesian letters which would aid the reader in pronunciation. The transliteration system, although probably not widely used beyond the members of the Persatuan Islam, did correspond in many important respects with a more widely accepted transliteration system developed by A.M.A. Temvang, and, indeed, may have had a considerable influence on Temvang's system.[66] In addition to this major endeavor on translation, there was also an anthology of Qu'rānic selections titled *Golden Rules*, in Dutch, prepared by Ibnoe Idris in 1932 at the behest of the Pendidikan Islam for use in the elementary schools, where the Dutch language was an important part of the curriculum.

A fourth grouping of books provided history of the early Muslim era. Published elsewhere, *Islamic History* by al-Kahiri and Sabirin, provided a brief overview of standard Islamic history. The centerpiece here was *The Digest*, written by Ahmad Hassan, which outlined Islamic history and explained it as encompassing the finest civilization that has ever existed.[67] This is a fundamental position of most modernist Muslim groups, but in this case Hassan may have also wanted to counter the secular nationalists, who looked to the Hindu past of Java as the golden age of Indonesia. Also included in this set was a book on Islam in Muslim Spain by Abdullah Aidid, an Arab associate working in Yogyakara; the book was titled *The History and Renown of Islam in Spain*, which outlined the accomplishments of the Islamic kingdoms in Spain between the seventh and tenth cen-

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[65] Ahmad Hassan, *Al-Furqan* (Jakarta and Surabaya, 1961); Trans. by M.H. Ramli, *Hakamah* (Bandung, n.d.); Ahmad Hassan, *Qamoes Al-Baja'* (Bandung, 1928).

[66] Roebaie Widjaya, "Biografia—A. Hassan: Pengarang, kritikus dan ahli debat Islam," *Hudjdjatul Islam* I, 1 (August 1956), 39; Ahmad Hassan, *Edjaan* (Bandung, 1929); A.M.A. Temvang, *Beladjar Huruf Al-Quran* (Jakarta, n.d.).

[67] M. al-Khahiri and Sabirin, *Tarich Islam* (Yogyakarta, [1931]).

turies, which is also an important point of reference for modernist Muslims.[68] Further, Moehammad Natsir and X. Shoemaker, a Dutch missionary who converted to Islam, published *Islamic Culture* in 1936, which laid out the high points of Muslim civilization and was considered an early masterpiece of writing for Natsir, who was at the time among the leaders of the Jong Islamieten Bond and vying for the top leadership post in that organization.[69]

A fifth grouping of books provided general information about the organization of the Persatuan Islam and its mission. These included results of the first congresses held by the organization and pamphlets on special matters affecting the movement. In 1931 the *Persatuan Islam Almanac* was published, which contained a calendar with important Muslim dates earmarked for ready use, and also included photos relating to the organization and selections from several of the books published earlier on proper worship and important matters of behavior.[70]

A sixth grouping of books dealt with political matters. The key volume here was *Islam and Nationalism* by Ahmad Hassan published in 1940, which was a summation of the Persis position regarding its dispute with the nationalists. It was noteworthy for its use of the terms "sinner," "hypocrite," and "backslider" to label opponents for their refusal to recognize the Islamic viewpoint in their vision of an independent Indonesia. Sabirin produced a biography of H.O.S. Cokroaminoto after his death in 1935, which lauded that leader for his efforts in leading the Sarekat Islam, portrayed him as a public hero, and noted his efforts to make Islam a vital part of the independence movement.[71]

Persatuan Islam efforts to write about religion came during a period when there was a great wave of literary activity among Indonesians.[72] Several literary groups appeared during this period, and a rash of newspapers, periodicals and books were published by the various political, social and religious clubs, organizations and movements. The Persatuan Islam's efforts were a part of this greater activity, and while it produced no outstanding literary works, several

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[68] Abdullah Aidid, *Tarich dan Kemadjoean "Islam di Spanjol"* (Yogyakarta, [1933]).
[69] Moehammad Natsir and X Shoemaker, *Cultuur Islam* (Jakarta, 1936).
[70] Persatuan Islam, *Almanak Persatoean Islam* (Bandung, 1931).
[71] Sabirin, *Riwajat Marhoem H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, harga dan djasanja* (Bandung, 1935).
[72] See Ruth T. McVey (ed.), *Indonesia* (New Haven, 1963), 410–437.

of its works have been very long lived and reprinted numerous times. Importantly, the Persatuan Islam developed a simplicity of style in its textbooks that facilitated the study of religion in schools and by persons interested in religion. Also, the writing of Indonesian religious textbooks had some impact on the development of Bahasa Indonesia, by defining and using religious terms in Indonesian language works.

G. *The Role of Formal Education*

From the very beginning, instruction in Islam and its sciences was offered at the meeting place of the Persatuan Islam in Bandung, but the courses and classes were operated by individuals or groups of individuals rather than by the organization itself.[73] Hadji Zamzam, first alone and then after 1924 in conjunction with Ahmad Hassan, gave lectures and talks to adult classes concerning Islamic belief and proper observance of religious ritual. Initially these sessions were probably little more than information sessions about religion described earlier, but over time they took on the characteristics of regular teaching. Persis facilities were also used by other teachers to give religious instruction, and some of these came under attack after the split in the organization in 1926, and were charged with giving "opinionated teachings and the viewpoint of the people of ignorance," a direct reference to the traditionalists.[74] Apparently those charged with such viewpoints went away as the charge is not repeated at a later date.

In 1927, and possibly before, classes were also operated for Muslim students studying at Dutch schools; a law of 1915 allowed optional religious instruction to be given as part of the public educational system.[75] Two students studying with A. Hassan during those sessions—Moehammad Natsir and Nuruddin al-Kahiri—later became activists in the Persatuan Islam and went on to become well-known in their own right. In 1930, the Pendidikan Islam was founded by Persis member A.A. Banaama, who used Persis facilities to conduct his first elementary school classes. An advertisement in 1932 stated that new association was to sponsor three related courses of study.

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[73] *Risalah*, I, 1 (June 1962), 10.
[74] *Risalah*, I, 1 (May 1963), 10.
[75] Noer, "Rise," 140; Vandenbosch, *East*, 47.

Pupils at the age of 5 could enter the kindergarten, which was considered to be a preparatory year for regular elementary school. The Dutch native school (HIS), which pupils entered at six years of age, had two classes. It constituted part of the Dutch recognized elementary education system, which was partially supported by the government with the parents paying fees as well. The third course of study was the Dutch middle school (MULO), which also consisted of two classes and was the junior high or middle school level of the Dutch education system. Like the HIS the state paid a subsidy and parents also paid fees. The Pendidikan Islam came under Moehammad Natsir's leadership in 1932, who then added a teachers' training school in Bandung, and by 1938, had started schools in five other locations on Java.[76] An advertisement stated that students in all three levels of instruction would be taught "modern subjects" common to these courses of study as well as the study of Islam.

In March 1936 the Persatuan Islam devised a new academic institution it called a "pesantren." The move was undoubtedly part of a drive to intensify the teaching of Islam throughout West Java manifested in the "grand information sessions" discussed in a previous section of this chapter. A brochure, issued by the school at a later date, stated that "the purpose of the founding of the 'Pesantren' was to produce advocates capable of spreading, teaching and defending, and maintaining Islam, wherever they were." The subject matter taught after the reorganization probably changed only slightly from what it had been prior to the reorganization, but Persis leaders were assured that the modernist Islamic viewpoint would be presented in all courses of instruction. Some general subjects and basic science courses were added at this time, but stress remained overwhelmingly on religious subjects. Ahmad Hassan became the director and principal teacher of the new school, and Moehammad Natsir,[77] who had earlier completed a teachers' training course sponsored by the Dutch administration, served as adviser and teacher. At the time of the establishment of the new school there were forty students, mostly from West Java, but with a few from other parts of Indonesia.[78]

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[76] Noer, "Rise," 141; *Pembela Islam*, 45 (April 1932), inside cover—front and back.

[77] Natsir, *Capita*; Noer, *Partai*, 126–134; Atjeh, *Sedjarah*, 217–221; Parlaungan, *Hasil Rakjat Memilih Tokoh-Tokoh Parlemen* (Jakarta, 1956), 175–176; Sutan Rais Alamsjah, *10 Orang Indonesia Terbesar Sekarang* (Jakarta, 1952), 83–102.

[78] Persatuan Islam, *Pesantren: Bagian Putera dan Puteri* (Bangil, 1960), 2–3.

During the same reorganization, an afternoon class was established for elementary school children, both boys and girls, who attended secular schools in the morning.[79] The director and principal teacher of the afternoon class, which came to be called the "Small School," was Ustadz Hasan Hamid, who had formerly been a teacher at the Al-Irsyad school in Batavia. A later leader of the Persatuan Islam, E. Abdurrahman was a teacher in the afternoon classes. The initial enrollment was about 100 pupils.

We can see by the description provided above that the move into education was done in increments and was not the product of a systematic plan to provide a specific system of Islamic education. In this respect the Persatuan Islam was not like either the Muhammadiyah or the Nahdlatul Ulama, which regarded education as the center piece of their own organizations and placed their major stress on continually expanding educational systems that were well defined and intended to fulfill a societal role. This is not to say that Persis activists did not find education important, for Hadji Zamzam, Ahmad Hassan and others were quite concerned with teaching, but in comparison with the publication of magazines and the public debates, education probably received less overall emphasis during this early period. Even though there was a more formal structuring of the teaching efforts of the Persatuan Islam, it was still connected primarily to the Islamic revitalization efforts among the larger population that were being undertaken by the association in general. Still education was given a strong boost in the overall priority of the association.

This education offered by the Persatuan Islam was certainly different than that offered by the traditionalist schools, which relied heavily on traditional teaching methods, on traditional textbooks, on the "hidden knowledge" of the leading teachers, on the relative importance of mysticism alongside classical studies, and on the master-student relationship that undergirded relationships between teacher and student. Persis students followed the trends of Dutch-sponsored education, with the use of regular classrooms, with general teaching plans, and used curriculum materials developed by the association itself with emphasis on modernist Muslim principles. The ratio of Islamic subjects to general subjects was 75:25 in the lower classes, changing over to 50:50 for the higher grades. Among the Islamic

[79] *Dunia Madrasah*, 5 (January 5, 1955), 17.

subject matter Arabic language was taught and readings from the *Qur'ān*, and books of *Ḥadīth* were included, but geography, arithmetic, modern history and Indonesian language were taught as well. Significantly, as late as 1954 four books written by Ahmad Hassan were still being used as textbooks, indicating that they had been used earlier, probably from the founding of pesantren in 1936.[80]

The final development in education occurred in 1940 when Ahmad Hassan decided to relocate the Pesantren to East Java, to the small city of Bangil, attracting 25 students from Bandung to go with him. The move was apparently prompted by family considerations on the part of Ahmad Hassan who had relatives living in the Surabaya area. This move had some far-reaching effects on the Persatuan Islam, but those effects were not immediately apparent in 1940 and 1941 when the move first occurred, and really only became important after Indonesian independence in the 1950's. The Small Pesantren remained in Bandung as did most other teaching efforts of the Persatuan Islam, such as the HIS classes started earlier.

H. *Aftermath—The Japanese Period (1942 to 1945)*

The schools and headquarters of the Persatuan Islam closed in 1942 when Japanese decrees ordered all such activities to cease.[81] The organization itself, its new school at Bangil, its periodicals, and all its many other activities, stopped functioning. When some Muslim organizations were allowed to resume activity in late 1942, the Persatuan Islam was not among this selected group, but several of its schools did resume holding classes, including the Small School in Bandung.[82] Persis activists were able to continue their ideological work only through organizations and institutions controlled by the Japanese administration. Consequently they did not play the prominent role in national affairs that the Muhammadijah and the Nahdlatul Ulama did, nor were Persis members called on to occupy important positions of responsibility as Muhammadijah and Nahdlatul Ulama

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[80] Yunus, *Sejarah*, 260–261.

[81] Ricklefs, *History*, 190.

[82] The Little School (*Pesantren Ketjil*) in Bandung was able to function during the Japanese Occupation, but apparently stopped activity in late 1945 when the British occupied Bandung. Several of the teachers conducted classes in other parts of West Java until 1948 when the school in Bandung was reopened. "Perkembangan Pesantren Persatuan Islam," *Risalah*, I, No. 1 (June 1962), 10.

activists were. Some Persis members, however, did serve in regional religious bureaus established by the Japanese. Two members, al-Kahiri and Moehammad Natsir were listed in a biographical dictionary of important religious scholars on Java published by the Japanese, but none of the other prominent activists of the pre-Japanese period—A. Hassan, Sabirin, Hadji Zamzam, or H. Mahmud Aziz, for example—were included in that publication.[83]

We have no evidence that Persis activists took a direct role in opposing the use of the symbolic bowing toward Tokyo initiated by the Japanese immediately after occupation that many Muslims opposed. Hamka, writing his father's biography, described the dilemma facing the senior Amrullah before a meeting with Japanese officials when he intended to defy the symbolic bowing, hoped that others would support him, but was disappointed that "Ahmad Hassan was absent."[84] Although one would suspect that he would have sided with Amrullah about the act being a version of putting other things alongside God in importance, we have no record of his opposition or any fatwā that would give us his actual thinking on the matter. D. Wildan, a member of the Persatuan Islam at a much later time, claims that the Persis activists—A. Hassan, Mohammad Natsir, Isa Anshary, Rusyad Nurdin, and Eman Sar'an—all regarded the symbolic bowing as anathema, since it collided in their minds with the ritual prayer when one faced Makkah. He asserts that they regarded the Japanese as greater disbelievers than the Dutch and that it was a primary factor in their general attitude toward Japanese control in Indonesia.[85] But it is unclear whether Wildan made this remark on the basis of his actual knowledge of Persis attitudes of the time or simply made a generalization applied to the members from wider reaction of religious scholars to the conditions of the Japanese occupation.

Despite attitudes of general disfavor with Japanese policy there is no record of protest or overt opposition by Persis activists, which is a reaction common to many other Islamic and nationalist associations and personalities. Like others the members of the Persatuan Islam outwardly cooperated with the Japanese, but engaged in low-level nationalist underground activity—primarily training and indoctrination—aimed at attaining eventual Indonesian independence. Ahmad

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[83] Gunseikanbu, *Orang Indonesia jang termuka di Djawa* (Yogyakarta, 1986), 431, 440.
[84] Hamka, *Ajahku*, 185.
[85] Wildan, *Sejarah*, 75.

Hassan continued to serve on the governing board of MIAI, although he was ill for a time and may not have been able to perform his duties during the time period when that organization was still in existence.[86] Wildan implies that he used his position on the MIAI board to further training policies that kept the independence movement alive, but we have no other record to confirm that claim.[87] Moehammad Isa Anshary was a member of the Secretariat of the MIAI organization in the Greater Bandung region and later held the same position in Masjoemi, the successor organization to MIAI. Isa Anshary's official biography stated that he was active in organizing youth for anti-Japanese underground activity and, in 1944, was imprisoned for a month when these activities were discovered by the Japanese. The lightness of the sentence indicates that no actual anti-Japanese activities had been undertaken, and that the arrest was sent as a warning to others not to undertake activities that were outside general Japanese purview.[88] Moehammad Natsir was an adviser on educational affairs in the Greater Bandung area and, in 1943, took an active part in organizing training programs for religious scholars from the wider Java area.[89] These programs, organized by the Indonesian religious scholars themselves, were officially intended to provide general instruction on Japanese ideas and beliefs, educational methods and even sports, but apparently there was considerable discussion among participating religious scholars concerning the promotion of Islam among the general Muslim population.[90] Presumably other Persis activists may have participated in this series of activities. Wildan mentions that with the formation of the home defense forces—Peta, Hizbullah and Sabillah—in 1943 and 1944, that the Persis youth organization contributed some of their members to those units, which gave them some rudimentary military training.[91]

This curtailed activity under the auspices of others was the contribution of Persis activists to the cause of Indonesia and Islam during the Japanese occupation. In losing its organization, most of its

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[86] Ahmad Hassan, *Kedaulatan* (Malang, 1946), 1.
[87] Wildan, *Sejarah*, 78.
[88] Parlaungan, *Hasil*, 156–158; Atjeh, *Sedjarah*, 219–224.
[89] Parlaungan, *Hasil*, 221; Noer, "Masjumi," 28.
[90] Deliar Noer, "Masjumi: Its organization, ideology and political role in Indonesia," M.A. thesis presented to Cornell University, 1960, 28.
[91] Wildan, *Sejarah*, 77.

teaching responsibilities, and, more importantly, its instruments of propaganda, its role diminished drastically. Most importantly, the Persis style depended highly on political openness and tolerance where members had the opportunity to expound their viewpoints forcefully and prompt others to react; the Japanese period was hardly that. So, by being denied the opportunity to speak out on religious and nationalist issues without fear of reprisal, the dynamism of the organization's members was stilled. Its only real efforts—participation in cadre training courses and teaching at the primary level—were at best only holding actions designed to preserve and enhance "true Muslim belief" at a low level of activity until an opportune period would allow a return to active efforts. This was to occur during the Revolutionary and Liberal Democracy periods.

CHAPTER THREE

FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF THE PERSATUAN ISLAM

A. *The Persis Rendition of Islamic Belief*

The most prolific writer in the Persatuan Islam was Ahmad Hassan, who wrote extensively about all the subjects that concerned the organization. Over time he brought together many of his shorter writings issued for a specific purpose into longer, unified works in order to outline some major phase of thought or belief that he held was an integral part of Islam. Significantly all his major works were published in the late 1930s or in the first two years of the1940s. Some works, such as the commentary on the *Qur'ān*, were only in rudimentary form and were finished later. Some completed works were refined later after Indonesian independence. But for the most part the formulation of Islamic doctrine was completed in this era and was used extensively by the association in a wide variety of its activities. It must be remembered that the original work was done for a number of purposes—for upgrading lay Muslim knowledge and encouraging correct behavior, to teach school children the standard lessons of Islam, and to give a religious decision to those seeking advice on specific topics of concern to them, or to answer or attack an opponent in a debate or in a magazine article. Consequently the books that were produced reflect the pragmatic nature of devising and arriving at conclusions concerning religion. G. Pijper, who had a continuing correspondence with him over a period of fifteen years, saw these efforts as unique to Ahmad Hassan and not reflective of other modernists outside Indonesia, such as Muḥammad ʿAbduh or Rashīd Riḍā.[1] A. Minhaji, in a thorough Ph.D. dissertation on his legal thinking, assesses him much the same and finds many of his conclusions to rest largely on his starting point.[2] Further, although he was certainly a scholar, he was not in the standard academic tradition of either the Muslim tradition or the Western sense, so his

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[1] Pijper, *Studiën*, 123.

[2] Akhmad Minhaji, "Ahmad Hassan and Islamic Legal Reform in Indonesia (1887–1958)," Ph.D. dissertation presented to McGill University, 1995, pp. 279–290.

writing is not always careful in analysis, is sometimes repetitious and at other times jumps points in logic and avoids normal modes of presentation, and at other times he is sloppy on grammar, spelling and general presentation. Consequently any attempt to generalize and summarize his writings run the risk of by-passing the context of the writings themselves and making the belief system more sophisticated than the way it was originally presented.

This first section of this chapter deals with basic beliefs of Islam as Ahmad Hassan expressed them in two of his major works and an anthology of his *fatāwā* produced throughout the era. The first is *Unity of God*, his major work on the nature of God and human relationship with Him. The second is *Prophethood*, concerning the characteristics and works of prophets, particularly Muḥammad, while the anthology is *Query-Resolution*, the anthology of *fatāwā*.

1. *God and His Attributes*

Ahmad Hassan approached the study of the nature of God with great reverence. In the introduction to *Unity of God*, he stated that "if the science of religion is viewed as holy because it contains the laws of God, then the science of God's nature is more holy (and indeed there is no real comparison) for its contents concern the attributes of God Who reveals that religion."[3] A proper understanding of the nature of God is valuable to all Muslims, he maintained, so that they may attain a proper relationship with God.[4] By acquainting himself with the knowledge of God's nature, the informed Muslim becomes aware of His greatness, and of the folly of fearing any creature other than God,[5] while improper understanding of God's nature causes humans to err and transgress His commands. The worship of saints by Christians and some Muslims,[6] and the Javanese practice of consulting sorcerers for performing miraculous feats were cited by Ahmad Hassan as examples of an improper comprehension of the nature of God, because such acts disregarded God's power and were contrary to His commands. He concluded that for their own

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[3] Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, 1. See Salim, *Djedjak*, 245–256; Hamka, *Ajahku*, 263–277; Adams, *Islam*, 144–148.

[4] Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, 1.

[5] *Ibid.*, 48.

[6] *Ibid.*, 58–59.

spiritual well-being and eternal reward, Muslims should study and try to comprehend God's nature.[7]

Ahmad Hassan began his discussion on the nature of God with a clear definition of God; a definition acceptable to both modernist and traditionalist elements of the Indonesian Muslim community.

> A. Clarify for me who Allāh is?
> B. Allāh is God Who creates, sustains and grants sustenance to everything that we see and do not see, that we know and do not know, in heaven, in the air, on the face of the earth, in the earth, in the water and everywhere.
>
> A. Are we able to see Allāh with our eyes or experience His existence with the other senses?
> B. We are not able to know the essence of Allāh with our five senses, and it is only necessary for us to believe on Him through the knowledge of His attributes alone.
>
> A. What do we believe about Allāh?
> B. We believe that there is no other God than Him, and that He possesses all the attributes of divinity and perfection, as well as great holiness. Regarding His attributes He is not needy, not weak, not submissive and nothing is like unto Him.
>
> A. Why are we obliged to believe this?
> B. Common sense leads us to believe this, as well as (the words and statements) of Allāh and His prophet, since these godly attributes are mentioned in the *Qur'ān* and in the *Ḥadīth*.[8]

Concerning God's existence and His attributes, Ahmad Hassan put forth a proof long propounded among Sunnī Muslim theologians. The very existence of things, he stated, indicates the existence of a God to the human reason. Humans know, for example, that the plain objects they view in everyday life, such as "a pen, a book, a table" do not exist by themselves, but are the product of the artisan who created them." In the same manner humans reason that there must also be a creator for humans, for animals and for all plant life on the earth. In fact, "our common sense is not able to accept an explanation whereby an object could exist without a creator." For example, plants grow from seeds, and seeds come from plants, but at some point there must have been a plant that did not come from a seed. Accordingly, "who made the first mother and

[7] *Ibid.*, 49–51.
[8] *Ibid.*, 3–4.

father, if it was not Allāh?" Carrying the argument to its logical conclusion the only possible solution is that God is a being, able to create, Who has not been created Himself, and that beyond such a conclusion human reason is unable to go.[9]

Having established to his own satisfaction that God exists, Ahmad Hassan listed each attribute necessary to life, and maintained that all such attributes must also belong to God since not to have them would make God less than perfect. For example, "it is unthinkable that God is not powerful, because one who is not powerful is weak. One who is weak could not be Allāh." In the same way, God must be alive, for to be dead is to lack power which is impossible in God. For the same reason, it is unthinkable that God could be plural or multiple, for in a situation where two gods exist one of them would certainly be weak, or their very equality would limit the power of each.[10] However, in making rational assumptions on the nature of God one should not make the mistake of identifying human characteristics with divine attributes. The nature of God (i.e., His attributes, such as hearing, seeing, living) is similar to that of a human; yet, at the same time, the divine and human forms are not identical, and God remains unique and distinct from His creation. The difference is one of degree since human life is limited, while God is eternal. Humans have certain powers, but they are limited in comparison with the power of God that is capable of producing whatever He desires. In the same way, humans are individuals, but have equals in other humans, while God's individuality cannot be paralleled. Therefore, despite the similarity of attributes "our attributes are not like the attributes of Allāh and Allāh is not like us."[11]

Concerning the "independent" will of humans, Ahmad Hassan stated that "we all believe that the world and all its contents were formed and created by God."[12] The problem, as he saw it, was whether God knew when He created the world that "we would perform this and that, and whether this and that would happen to us." He rejected the notion that events could occur without God's willing them, since all creation had been willed by God, and therefore, by definition, the will of humans as well. Ahmad Hassan rejected

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[9] *Ibid.*, 4–6.
[10] *Ibid.*, 10, 11, 13.
[11] *Ibid.*, 8.
[12] *Sual-Djawab,* XII, 84; Hassan, *Pengadjaran Shalat,* II, 31.

the argument that God had created humans but is not actively involved in what humans do, for if He were not involved, it would mean that God's power was limited, hence, an attribute would exist that is impossible in God. Rather, events "occur with the will of Allāh. . . . This is called determinism." In support of this conclusion he cited *Al-Nisā'* 78, which states: "Say that everything comes from Allāh," and *al-Ḥadīd* 22, stating: "Naught of disaster befalleth in the earth or in yourselves but it is in a Book before We bring it into being."[13]

Ahmad Hassan recognized that to accept this particular view of determinism raised many problems in regard to the purpose of religion and of life itself. "If all these matters occur with the will of Allāh, then why did God send a message, establish Religion and give laws to humans, whereas creatures perform those commands and prohibitions according to the will of Allāh Himself?" He also admitted that there were a number of other difficult problems, such as "sorrow and happiness, heaven and hell" that also appear contradictory to humans. Despite this belief that all things are determined by God, Ahmad Hassan gives the impression throughout his works that Muslims are not to allow this belief in God's complete control over creation to lead to resignation and a blind acceptance of fate. He constantly iterated his belief that humans should strive and use their reason to do those things they knew to be right and correct.[14] If an evil person does wrong against a Muslim by attempting to steal his rights, it is necessary to "respond with . . . strength sufficient for achieving the return of those rights." In the same manner when one in unarmed and meets a tiger he runs, but when the tiger is in the village and endangers the inhabitants, "it is certain we will respond by building a trap, preparing a snare."[15] He concluded that "we may not continuously run from the evil person or the wild beast," but must respond, and that response "may not be with the bare hands, but rather it is necessary that we respond seriously [with thought], intently."[16] While this description appears only incidentally concerned with the problem of determinism, it illustrates Ahmad Hassan's thinking regarding the human ability to shape

[13] *Sual-Djawab*, XII, 85.
[14] *Ibid.*, 85.
[15] Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, 48.
[16] *Ibid.*; cf. Adams, *Islam*, p. 153.

environment, and how efforts affect one's own fate in some way. However, when called upon to reconcile complete determinism with his belief in the human ability to change things through effort, Ahmad Hassan would always fall back on his answer that God is always involved; and that when people desire to do something, that desire is willed by God; and when they decide not to do something, that attitude also is willed by God.[17]

Ahmad Hassan's presentation of determinism is only lightly discussed in his theological exposition. Unlike many modernist Muslim thinkers, such as Muḥammad 'Abduh who devoted considerable attention to this problem,[18] Ahmad Hassan made only limited efforts to explain this thorny problem to his readers. He touched on it only in relation to the power of God, unlike his contemporary Agus Salim who dealt with it in several works and attempted to clarify the problem by examining the problem from the viewpoint of human existence, nature and society as well as from the viewpoint of God's power.[19] In many respects, Ahmad Hassan's approach was more like that of the conservative Muslim scholars in Indonesia of the time who placed emphasis on the predetermination of all things without attempting to reconcile such a viewpoint with the problems it creates in human thinking.[20] Throughout Ahmad Hassan's works, however, there is the underlying emphasis on action and individual choice—as in the example of the tiger in the village—both marks of the modernist Muslim, and in several works he implied that eternal rewards and punishments were a result of a human's own free choice.[21]

2. *God, the Giver of Laws*

Ahmad Hassan maintained that, as the regulator and sustainer of the universe, God has developed standards and patterns that humans know as "law." Accordingly such law is not a single, all-embracing entity, but several different systems, each regulating a portion of human endeavor. Sacred law (*sharī'ah*) regulates the relationship with

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[17] *Hudjdjatul Islam*, I, 1 (August 1956), 36.
[18] Adams, *Islam*, 152–155.
[19] Salim, *Djedjak*, pp. 257–288; M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Al-Islam: Tugas Hidup Seorang Muslim* (Medan, 1952), I, 81–83; Hamka, *Peladjaran* Agama Islam (Jakarta, 1956), 83–86.
[20] Cf. Geertz, *Religion*, 150–152; Anam, *Pertumbuhan*, 139–151.
[21] Hassan, *Islam*, 27.

God, commanding people to perform certain actions and to abstain from others. Created law shapes the relationship and interrelationship of humans with other humans and regulates the progress and status of society. Finally, the laws of nature regulate the working of natural phenomena and determine many human actions and behavior. Ahmad Hassan believed that it was important for people to perceive the differences among these various law systems so that they would be able to understand what was and was not appropriate in each of these three areas of human relationship.[22]

Sacred law, regulating human relationship with God, is, of course, the most important of the legal systems, according to Ahmad Hassan. "To worship Allāh," he stated in *Unity of God*, "is to humble oneself in order to perform a task in the manner ordered and desired by Him." The purpose of sacred law is to outline the commands and desires of God so that people can undertake them, for without sacred law there is no real way of knowing just what God desires them to do. For this reason God has given humans this sacred law in the form of the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*, as a guide and a directive.[23] In truth, sacred law divides all human action into five parts. There are those acts that must be performed and constitute a sin if they are not. There are those acts which are commended with reward by Allāh when performed, but which do not constitute a sin if they are not. There are acts which are neutral, that is, they are neither worthy of praise nor in any way reprehensible. Then there are those acts not pleasing to God, but if performed do not constitute a sin, and finally, there are acts forbidden by God, and if performed constitute a sin.[24] Beyond this general classification of all human actions, sacred law is concerned with worship, temporal affairs and personal behavior. Regarding these, it was explained in *Government according to Islam*, published after the era was over in 1946, that so far as worship is concerned, sacred law regulates most ritual and order of worship, such as "prayer, fasting, the pilgrimage, burial rites, vows and sacrificial offerings."[25] These matters of worship, in fact, make up

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[22] Ahmad Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, (Bangil, 1941), 60, 67–68; Abdulkadir Hassan, *U-Shul-Fiqih* (Surabaya, 1956), 20–21.

[23] Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, 70; Majid Khadduri and Herbert Liebesnv, *Law in the Middle East* (Washington, 1955), 85–112; H.A.R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago, 1947), 85–105.

[24] Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, 60.

[25] Hassan, *Pemerintahan*, 8.

the larger part of sacred law because they are concerned with rules and regulations that cannot be derived by human reasoning but only through the revelation from God to humans.

The temporal aspects of sacred law were divided by Ahmad Hassan into two parts. The first part is concerned with matters that pertain to Muslims alone—marriage, the donation for charitable purposes, inheritance, dietary laws, striving for the faith, and everything else relating to these matters; they are not binding on non-Muslims living in a Muslim area. The second part are laws binding on Muslims and on all non-Muslims living in Muslim areas, such as matters of trade, labor relations, contracts, peace accords, wages, associations, legal representation, guarantees, securities, bankruptcy and other legal affairs generally regarded as civic matters. Finally sacred law furnishes criminal law, by listing the manner and amount of punishment for such crimes as "wounding, murder, swindle, recrimination, drunkenness and fornication."[26] He noted that beyond such legalistic aspects of sacred law, each Muslim has the additional responsibility, transcending all phases of sacred law, to "promote good and banish evil." This, as a personal function, is one in which every Muslim must be given the widest authority.[27] Ahmad Hassan concluded that the proper observance of sacred law is important since it marks the believer from the unbeliever, sinner and hypocrite.[28]

Ahmad Hassan explained that beyond sacred law humans are regulated by certain laws of nature, which he divided into two parts, i.e., law acceptable to reason, and law accepted by custom. According to that accepted by reason, for example, "a father must be older than his son" and contrariwise, it is impossible that "a child is older than his father."Custom is similar to matters perceived by reason, and is derived by humans "after witnessing a particular occurrence repeatedly, such as 'fire burns' or a 'knife cuts.'" These two classifications are concerned with human observance of natural phenomena, and since Ahmad Hassan gave no criterion for dealing with such law, he presumably meant only to show that it cannot but be observed and is generally beyond human ability to control. Finally, he noted that there is created law, a type of law used by nations, societies, organizations and households and includes customary law. It is a

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[26] *Ibid.*, 8–9.
[27] *Ibid.*, 15.
[28] Hassan, *Islam*, 1.

type of law created according to need, and binding on all members of the group holding the law to be valid. Unlike sacred law, matters of custom may be changed, added to, or lessened according to the desires of the community.[29]

Ahmad Hassan held that, after having perceived the differences among these various types of law, people should be able to realize the difference among what cannot be changed, what can be changed but should not for religious reasons, and what can be changed depending on current social and political mores. They must then be aware that change affects the sacred law. In matters of worship, i.e., ritual worship, there could be no deviation, addition or omission of the precise order and content of worship as prescribed by *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*. In a legal opinion on the subject, he clarified this point by stating that "Allāh has stated that He has perfected our Religion . . . and there is no innovation in worship, except that it is wrong."[30]

In secular matters regulated by sacred law, Ahmad Hassan stated that there is room for some change in the execution of particular laws, but the law itself is not subject to change. In a second legal opinion on this subject, he attempted to show just how free humans are to amend procedure connected with the sacred law. ". . . Religion has commanded us to learn, to aid people and fight. . . . The commanding of the order to learn, give aid, and the command to fight are commands of "worship," but actual performance is the way of custom, i.e. the manner may be altered by time and necessity, in accordance with knowledge then on earth."[31] Thus, while humans are generally free to change created law, i.e., social and political mores, he cautioned lest such laws conflict with the sacred law which lays down minimum regulations for the proper conduct of human affairs. *Islam and Nationalism* dealt with the possible conflict between these two types of law and warned that whoever does not give proper place to sacred law "on earth and in the Hereafter is a disbeliever, an evil doer and a sinner." Accordingly a person is an disbeliever if one holds that a law exists better than the law of God, a wrongdoer if one makes an unsuitable law, i.e., one contrary to sacred law

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[29] Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, 61–67.

[30] *Sual-Djawab*, VII, 37; *Hudjdjatul Islam*, I, 1 (August 1956), 26–29.

[31] *Sual-Djawab*, III, 23–24; Reuben Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam* (Cambridge, 1957), 260–262.

when one should be made, and a sinner if "one knows of the existence of the law of Allāh in a particular matter, but somehow, either deliberately or by necessity, judges with laws that were not revealed by Allāh." Ahmad Hassan recognized, however, that sacred law and created law were sometimes closely related, that it was difficult to perceive the difference on occasion, and that confusion sometimes resulted among sincere Muslims.[32]

3. *Prophethood*

The pamphlet *Was Muhammad Truly a Prophet?*[33] was written to point out "that the Prophet Muḥammad is truly a Messenger (*rasūl*) commissioned by Allāh to guide human beings in matters temporal and spiritual." Ahmad Hassan stated in the preface that he had derived his evidence and proofs from the *Qur'ān* and firm *Ḥadīth*, and that the arguments he presented were not only acceptable by faith, but were "actual proofs that stand the test of reason and investigation."[34] In a later revision of that writing, titled *Prophethood*,[35] Ahmad Hassan described first the general attributes and characteristics of prophethood in the tradition of Sunnī Islam and then outlined Muḥammad's life as the fulfillment of these conditions. *Prophethood* is a highly idealized study of Muḥammad, and deliberately so, for it was conceived as a reply to criticism from the nationalists and Christians that Islam was decadent and hide-bound, preserving a way of life set down by an seventh-century desert ruler on the edge of civilization.[36] To refute such arguments Ahmad Hassan emphasized those aspects and actions of Muḥammad's life that were unusual for Muḥammad's age, but in conformity with current knowledge and reasoning, and cited such instances as evidence of Islam's capability to prosper in the twentieth century. While adapted to his own style and format, Ahmad Hassan's study followed much the same basic argument put forward by Muḥammad 'Abduh, and later by Rashīd Riḍā.[37]

In *Study on the Schools of Muslim Jurisprudence*, Ahmad Hassan stated that humans are unable to know by their own mental capabilities

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[32] Hassan, *Islam*, 5–6.

[33] Ahmad Hassan, *Benarkah Muhammad itu Rasul?* (Bangil, n.d.).

[34] Ahmad Hassan, *Is Muhammad a True Prophet?* (Bangil, 1951), p. 3.

[35] Ahmad Hassan, *An-Nubuwwah* (Bangil, 1941).

[36] Gibb, *Modern*, 74–75; Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam* (London, 1922).

[37] See Adams, *Islam*, 155–161, 201–202; Zainal 'Arifin Abbas, *Peri Hidup Muhammad Rasulllah s.a.w. (Medan, 1957)*; cf. also Hamka, *Peladjaran*, 147–150.

just what God's purpose was in placing humans on the earth. To give humans an infallible guide, God sent numerous prophets with sacred books to explain the divine purpose and outline human duties, both in relation to God and toward other creatures.[38] It was explained that the *Qur'ān* lists[39] twenty-five prophets—although this was not an exclusive list and that there had been many more—who were sent in the past. Each prophet was sent to a particular community, but the Prophet Muḥammad, as the final emissary who carried the complete message sufficient to give guidance to the end of time, had been made a messenger to all peoples.[40] It was emphasized, undoubtedly as a refutation of the Ahmadiyah Qadiyan's belief that its own founder was a prophet, that there had been no other prophets—nor would there ever be—after Muḥammad.

Concerning prophecy, Ahmad Hassan noted that it was a condition unable to be inherited, or earned through pious life, and was not to be confused with magic or fortune-telling, both skills which could be learned.[41] Revelation in its highest form (*wahy*) was generally confined to males, but on occasion it has been given in limited form to women as well. The message entrusted to the prophets through revelation was always concerned with matters of law and worship, that is, it told just what God regarded as good and as evil so that believers could give proper emphasis to the things that really matter and prepare themselves for final judgment. To protect people from committing error, God protected the Prophet Muḥammad—and, indeed, all prophets before him—from making any wrong actions or statements in matters involving religious affairs. Actually, in matters of earthly affairs prophets were subject to forgetfulness or able to do wrong, but Allāh did not allow this wrong to stand and admonished them through inspiration or the reminder of other humans so that they could set things aright. If this were not so, it would have been possible for them to have introduced mistakes into religion or even for them to have concealed or distorted the religious message itself.[42]

The second section of *Prophethood* narrowed the topic from prophethood in general to a specific discussion of the Prophet Muḥammad,

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[38] Hassan, *Madz-hab*, 1; Gibb, *Modern*, 87.
[39] Hassan, *An-Nubuuwah*, 21.
[40] *Ibid.*, 16.
[41] *Ibid.*, 18, 25.
[42] *Ibid.*, 10–11, 167.

where a highly idealized picture of the Prophet emerged. Short chapters individually described the Prophet's many virtues and elaborated anecdotes designed to depict his generosity, good will, hospitality, steadfastness, self-control, forgiveness, bravery and trustworthiness.[43] The lesson was repeatedly stated that throughout his life the behavior of the Prophet was impeccable and, accordingly, his actions differed radically from the customs of the people of his day, for he never "worshiped idols, fornicated, drank alcohol or gambled" from childhood until he died. Ahmad Hassan concluded that this abstention, despite a lack of education and living among people who considered such actions normal, could not have been a coincidence and was due to his having been a chosen instrument of God, protected from intentional and unintentional sin and given a character containing only the noblest of qualities.[44] In a parallel argument, it was stressed that Muḥammad was illiterate in the meaning that he could not read or write and, therefore, had no access to the scriptures of other religions. Muḥammad was never known to have associated with persons of other religions, and was never charged by his enemies among the Quraysh with having derived his teachings from those of the Christians and Jews. Indeed, the message Muḥammad revealed was different from that of the Christians and Jews; it criticized the other two religions on many points, and for those reasons could hardly have been an attempt on Muḥammad's part to appeal to those religious groups for political reasons, as some Western writers have maintained. Rather the message must have genuinely come from God.[45]

In a third argument, Ahmad Hassan stated that "in Islam there are several matters that are perfectly ordered, such as worship, culture, society, marriage, trade, personal care, care of orphans, management of education, household affairs, national life, etc., which are necessary for orderly human living." The overwhelming success of this system—so different from the practices of the Arab tribes of Muḥammad's day, certainly not established by any other religion, and achieved only through the Prophet's efforts—could hardly have occurred by accident and must be viewed as another proof of Muḥammad's extraordinary guidance from God.[46] Further, like other

[43] *Ibid.*, 42, 48.
[44] *Ibid.*, 39.
[45] *Ibid.*, 44–46.
[46] *Ibid.*, 39–40.

prophets before him, Muḥammad had access to certain secret matters and was able to perform miracles. For example, Muḥammad prophesied the success of Islam and the peace it would bring to Arabia, forecast that many of his tormenters would embrace Islam and become its staunch defenders, and foresaw plots against his own life that were only revealed to be true in time.[47] Among the miracles ascribed to him were cases of healing, destruction of idols, and feeding large numbers of people.[48] However, the most spectacular miracle was the "Night Journey" and the "Ascension," in which God took Muḥammad, both his body and spirit, into heaven and conversed with him.[49] On these points, Ahmad Hassan differed from many other modernist Muslim writers outside of Indonesia in his time, who generally did not emphasize the claim of the Prophet to predict events and to perform miracles, since it was considered to be incompatible with scientific thinking.

According to *Prophethood*, the genuineness of the Prophet's mission is also shown by the great difference between the language of the *Qur'ān* and the arrangement of the *Ḥadīth*, both of which came to humans through the same voice. Ahmad Hassan argued that if the *Qur'ān* were not from God, but only a creation of Muḥammad, it would not be different from the style and form of *Ḥadīth*, as it actually is. "We know, according to the Muslim faith, that the *Qur'ān*, its words, its arrangements, its composition, its compilation, its contents, its meaning, is from Allāh. As for *Ḥadīth*, which are related to this religion, then their content and meaning is from Allāh, but the compilation, composition and words are from the Prophet Muḥammad himself."[50]

4. *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*

Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* were of great importance to Ahmad Hassan and the Persatuan Islam for the fundamentalist Muslim viewpoint stressed that these sources presented Islam in its pristine form and in that form could be adapted to conditions and concepts prevailing in the modern world. Like Rashīd Riḍā, Ahmad Hassan charged the

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[47] *Ibid.*, 197, 199, 203.
[48] *Ibid.*, 222, 225.
[49] *Ibid.*, 233–234. See M. Munawar Khalil, *Peristiwa Isra' dan Miradj* (Jakarta, 1961); Ahmad Hassan, *Sedjarah Isra' dan Miradj* (Bangil, 1941); Salim, *Djedjak*, 207–244.
[50] Hassan, *An-Nubuwwah*, 166–167.

traditionalist scholars with having neglected these two sources, and wrongly stressing the interpretations of legalists and theologians. The Persatuan Islam, perhaps more than any other modernist Muslim group in Indonesia, drew heavily on *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* to provide evidence for the correctness of its position on religious, social, economic and political issues. It is not surprising then that considerable space was given in *Prophethood*—and in several other works as well[51]—to prove that *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* were genuine, to show that they both were God-inspired, and that they both were suitable to be used as the mainsprings of Islam.

The *Qur'ān* is unique, Ahmad Hassan maintained, in that it is different from any other writing, and humans have been unable to produce anything similar or equal to it in either style or content. The *Qur'ān* itself contains the challenge, made originally to the Arabs—but to all other people as well—to create a chapter like one of the chapters of the Qur'ān. But until the present age, "there has been no one who can take that challenge. And the *Qur'ān* specified that they cannot and will not be able to do so."[52] There is also its appeal to humans; the beauty of its style has an attraction unlike the poetry or writings of mortals. "Is there any other book which is read and listened to by its followers with such delight and respect?"[53] Further, it has information only a holy book could have, since it foretold certain events that were to occur during the lifetime of the Prophet, and subsequently did. In *al-Fatḥ* 27, for example, it was announced that Muḥammad would enter Makkah in peace, even though at the time the prophecy was revealed Muḥammad was residing in Madinah and there was warfare with the Quraysh, the rulers of Makkah, so it seemed unlikely that he would return; yet he did!. In several other places, there are forecasts citing Muḥammad's eventual victory over the Quraysh and the Jews, and *al-Rūm* 3 accurately forecast a later Roman victory over the Persians.[54] Ahmad Hassan concluded that since Muḥammad was human, he had no way of accurately forecasting such events, and that the uncanny accuracy of the forecasts was proof that the *Qur'ān* was the product of divine inspiration.[55]

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[51] M. Munawar Khalil, *Al-Qur'ān dari Masa ke Masa* (Jakarta and Groningen, 1954); Abdulkarim Amrullah *Pengantar Usul* (Jakarta, 1958), 31–63; Amelz, *Tjokroaminoto*, II, 17–19.

[52] Hassan, *Muhammad?*, 52.

[53] *Ibid.*, 52.

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] *Ibid.*

Still another proof put forth by Ahmad Hassan for the authenticity of the *Qur'ān* was the claim that it conformed with reason, and particularly with modern scientific thought. He cited *al-Nūr* 45, which states ". . . and Allāh has created every creeping animal from water . . ." as a reference to scientific explanations that all life originated from water.[56] He cited *Qur'ānic* references concerning the movement of the earth and heavenly bodies and stated that such passages were consistent with modern astronomical theory, even though these theories were completely unknown when the *Qur'ān* was revealed. Similarly, the *Qur'ān* mentions wind as the carrier of pollen and as aiding in the reproduction of plant life, a remarkable observation since this was not yet a part of human knowledge.[57] Finally, the *Qur'ān* speaks of smallpox, or the pest—in symbolic terms to be sure,—but nevertheless with an understanding comprehensible to scientific thinking. Since the Prophet Muḥammad was himself ignorant and lived in an age before scientific enlightenment, he could have only received this knowledge that is so in harmony with modern thinking through divine inspiration.[58]

Ahmad Hassan described *Sunnah* (Way of the Prophet) as "the speech of the Prophet, behavior of the Prophet and behavior of other persons which was permitted by him."[59] In matters of religious affairs, such as prayer and other forms of worship, the Prophet's words and actions were regulated as revelation from God and laid down the proper manner in which these religious duties were to be performed. Besides these matters of religious ritual, that is, in matters of personal behavior and in secular affairs, the Prophet was not guided by revelation, but regulated his performance by mental exertion, which was considered correct so long as revelation was not sent to challenge that interpretation. It was concluded that Muslims accepted all the actions and behavior of the Prophet-whether sent by revelation or derived from that message through reason—as part of their religion.[60]

5. *On Being a Muslim*

A question of importance throughout Muslim history, and one of equal importance in Indonesia in the second quarter of the twentieth

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[56] *Ibid.*, 43.
[57] *Ibid.*, 44–45.
[58] *Ibid.*; cf. Gibb, *Modern*, 72.
[59] Hassan, *An-Nubuwwah*, 32.
[60] *Ibid.*, 18.

century when a considerable portion of the population was only nominally Muslim, was, who was actually a believer and who was not. Like many scholars before him, Ahmad Hassan was lenient. In reply to the question "how does an unbeliever become a believer?" he stated: "[He is a believer] if he believes on Allāh, on the angels, on Allāh's books of religion, on the prophets, on the day of judgment, and on good and bad fortune." He added, however, that it is necessary only for a person to recite the confession of faith, that there is no God but Allāh and Muḥammad is the prophet of God, to be considered a Muslim by other Muslims. The reasoning for this argument was that "belief means faith, and faith is in the heart, therefore we are not able to know the heart of anyone. This situation is surrendered to God." The practice was in accordance with the practice of Muḥammad—as recorded in *Ḥadīth*—who accepted converts to Islam on the basis of reciting the creed alone.[61] Ahmad Hassan recognized that there were four remaining obligations for Muslims beyond recitation of the creed, namely, prayer, giving to the poor, fasting during the month of *Ramaḍān* and the pilgrimage. These four were "important obligations that must be performed by people who have already recited the confession." But even though they are required of all Muslims, not to have performed them does not indicate that a person is not a Muslim; for if such were the case, a person who had not performed the pilgrimage or given the donation to the poor, even though the person possessed little wealth, would not be considered a Muslim. He concluded that the significance of these four pillars is not like reciting the confession in marking the believer off from the unbeliever.[62]

In the same vein, Ahmad Hassan maintained that a person could not be judged an unbeliever unless he undertook some very specific and significant act by which he clearly denied Islam. "Considering a person an unbeliever is not a small matter. A person who confesses Islam may not be considered a disbeliever unless he continuously and clearly denies the *Qur'ān*, the Prophet, any one of the laws of Islam mentioned in religion, such as clearly and unmistakenly worshiping idols, paying homage to spirits, or other matters that clearly constituted disbelief."[63] As for the believer who held mistaken

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[61] *Sual-Djawab*, II, 43–44.
[62] *Ibid.*, 44.
[63] *Sual-Djawab*, III, 30; Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, 46–48.

ideas on religious questions—even if the question was one of belief—he could not be considered a disbeliever. As proof of this stand, he stated that seventy-three persons were mentioned in *Ḥadīth* as committing errors in religious matters, and that the Prophet—although reprimanding them for their mistakes—regarded them still as members of his community and not as disbelievers. He also quoted several other *Ḥadīth*, stating that falsely accusing a person of disbelief was to make a disbeliever out of the person making the false accusation, and concluded his argument on the note that judging a person's religious faith is a matter for God, not for humans.[64]

6. *Some Comparisons*

In conclusion, the Hassan rendition of the basic teachings of Islam were closely related to the standard Sunnī teachings as expressed by the classical theologian al-Ashʿarī, by the modernist Muslim thinker Muḥammad ʿAbduh and by the neo-fundamentalist activist Abdul Aʿlā Mawdūdī. The Ashʿarite stress on the importance of God as original creator and as a being with total perfection is clearly stated, even as it is in ʿAbduh and Mawdūdī. Beyond that Hassan acknowledges that all things owe their existence to God and God has the total power over all acts of the universe, including that of human beings. Like the Ashʿarite, he regards God as in complete control of the universe down to the smallest detail. At the same time he deemphasizes or disregards the Ashʿarite belief regarding God as engaging in a continuous, non-ending pattern of creating and recreating as was found in the writings of al-Baqillānī and other classical Sunnī thinkers. Still he reflects Ashʿarite views on the functioning of the physical universe where it was held that the universe functioned the way that it did as a reflection of God's perfection and his constant repetition of creation in a logical pattern. Hassan too finds the physical universe subject to a natural, physical law that God has installed, without speaking of the constant re-creation. He carries it further by finding that humans also create custom and law because of the manner of their created existence and the created conditions around them. While certainly not the same as Ashʿarite thinking, Hassan can be seen as within the tradition and a successor to it.[65]

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[64] *Sual-Djawab*, III, 31.

[65] Malcolm Kerr, *Islamic Reform: the Political and Legal Theories of Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966), 57–66.

Hassan's thinking parallels that of Muḥammad ʿAbduh with its stress on the position of humans in a God-created universe and on the implications of that condition to the role of humans life in the contemporary world. Their views on the role and function of prophets is parallel and the need for the revealed word to give human's guidance is expressed in similar terms. Hassan's arguments about the responsibility of humans for living dynamic lives in this world are the marks of the modernist Muslim and are a reflection of what ʿAbduh had written earlier. ʿAbduh spent much more time on theological and philosophical justifications that did Hassan, so his thinking bears a more mature look than Hassan who saws these matters as important, but not exactly his field of concern, instead centering on the actions of Muslims in living godly lives in accordance with the *Qurʾān* and *Ḥadīth*. Where ʿAbduh theorized many of these matters, Hassan merely states them. On the other side, Hassan seems to have somewhat different ideas about the role of custom and human-created law in the functioning of societies, where ʿAbduh was more appreciative of sociological considerations in the spirit of Ibn Khaldīn and the historical action of God in history in punishing ungodly societies. Some of this difference apparently reflected the concerns Hassan had with the functioning of society and nature in Southeast Asia, which set it apart from conditions in the Middle East and, hence, with the view of society that prevailed there.[66]

Hassan is consistent with Mawdūdī's perceptions regarding God's complete mastery of the universe and His absolute control over it physically, even to the actions of humans. Like Mawdūdī, although expressed somewhat differently, Hassan sees God unwilling to coerce humans into complete submission, giving them an element of free choice.[67] The role of the Prophet Muḥammad in delivering the *Qurʾān* and becoming a living object lesson as crucial to the proper behavior of believers is shared by the two thinkers. In addition, both writers are brief in their comments about the theology of Islam, treating it generally and as a preface to other matters that are more temporal in nature. The proper life of the believer is the centerpiece of their concerns, with Mawdūdī moving in the direction of contemporary institutions, particularly those involving economics and politics, and Hassan concentrating on matters of correct behavior.

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[66] Adams, *Islam*, 104–161; Kerr, *Reform*, 109–123.
[67] Mawdudi, "Economic Teachings," pp. 191–92.

Significantly, in this late colonial era, it is on the direction of these efforts that marks their primary difference, which would change for Hassan with the arrival of Indonesian independence, when he would devote considerable attention to the relationship between Islam and politics as well. In the earlier period, however, it is striking that Hassan could write an entire book on the Prophet and make only passing reference to his political legacy, seeing his efforts as primarily focusing on building the model for perfect behavior, without much reference to political leadership, as Mawdūdī did.

B. *Beliefs Common in Indonesian Society*

It was natural that the Persatuan Islam, in searching for a "pure" Islam free of all accretions, would oppose these elements of a popular life that it believed conflicted with Islam. Persis opposition never solidified into a major campaign, perhaps because there was no organization identified with local custom that could be a specific target of propaganda and polemic, and because the elements that fundamentalist Islam disapproved of were so pervasive in Indonesian life that it was difficult to generate any effective opposition among the Indonesian public. Nonetheless, the writers of the Persatuan Islam did take exception in their writings to specific practices that they believed contravened acceptable religious behavior, and propagation efforts included material that addressed this endemic problem. There were three principal writers that we have cited here for their work on this subject: Ahmad Hassan, Hadji Mahmud Aziz and Mohammed Munir. These were the principal writers of religious opinions for *Islamic Defender* and *The Voice*, and all three followed the approach, sources and style developed by Ahmad Hassan of briefness, directness and sureness as they dealt with a large of array of subject matter. Since each of these opinions was written separately, pulling them together runs some risk of distortion and inaccurate generalization, but, for the most part, the themes that are developed below seem to have been fairly clear as principles in the thinking of all three writers.

1. *The Ritual Meal*

The Persatuan Islam generally disapproved of the custom, common to most ethnic groups in Indonesia, of giving celebratory meals to mark important occasions. Like other Muslim modernist groups, this

practice was rejected because it was tied in with the animist practices that much of the non-Muslim and nominal Muslim population found important, such as non-Islamic spirits, and superstitions regarding propitious and unlucky days and numbers. Mohammed Munir was explicit in his opposition to the ritual meal and in a *fatwā* on that subject, stated that "performing a ritual meal as it is generally practiced in Indonesia is innovation . . . ." His argument was actually less concerned with the religious implications than with the serious financial repercussions on persons holding feasts. "This particular type of innovation sometimes ruins people who are not well to do, for they even sell their belongings, or place them in pawn, or borrow money to hold a feast, and consequently they go into debt and become poor." Truly sound reasoning tells us that people in debt should not increase debts, but should be happy to liquidate their indebtedness."[68] In a *fatwā* titled "Ritual meal for Pregnancy," Ahmad Hassan stated that ". . . from conception until birth, there is not a single type of special meal, whatever it is called,—*kanduri, slametan, pesta* or *perdjamuan*—that is established by Religion." He stated that Islam commands a celebration to be observed at marriage, but maintained that the practice of reciting litanies and confessions of faith at any such event is not a part of worship and should not be done. Ahmad Hassan's *fatwā* also stated that on the seventh day after the birth of a child Muslims are commanded to make a sacrifice, name the child, and then may have a meal for the immediate family from the meat of the sacrifice. "In this matter there is never a reading of any prayers."[69]

All three writers objected strongly to the meal held at a house of mourning on the day of the burial, and on several succeeding days to recite special prayers for the redemption of the deceased. Usual Indonesian practice was to meet in the house of the deceased immediately after the burial ceremony, and again on the third, seventh, fortieth, one hundredth and one thousandth day after the death.[70] The rationale for this practice was that religious merit could be generated by those present through the performance of non-obligatory

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[68] *Sual-Djawab*, V, 37.

[69] *Sual-Djawab*, VII, 7.

[70] Geertz, *Religion* 71–72; *Sual-Djawab*, 12, 33; Hurgronje, *Achehnese*, I, 429; Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Muslim Institutions*, trans. John D. MacGregor (London, 1950), 173.

worship, such as repetition of the *dhikr*, recitations from the *Qur'ān* and special prayers, and that the merit gained thereby could then be made over to the deceased for his reward.[71] Traditionalist Muslims held that "beneficial" prayers in the life cycle might be conducive to heightening awareness of religion in the general population, which tended toward laxiety in performance of religious duties in general. For example, in 1934 the traditionalist Muslim periodical *Our Obligations* (*Kewajidban Kita*) cited a *Ḥadīth* stating that on one occasion the Prophet went to the home of the bereaved after a burial and ate food there prepared by the household members.[72] On the basis of this reference the Islamic Council at Samalangka, Aceh issued a *fatwā* stating that gathering and eating in the house of the deceased was permissible. In his own *fatwā* on the subject Ahmad Hassan countered that this act of the Prophet was contrary to the usual Indonesian practice, and stated that the Prophet had ordered it out of consideration for the deceased's family at a time when their grief made normal household functions difficult. After this explanation Ahmad Hassan proceeded to reject, as weak, the *Ḥadīth* used by the Achenese scholars in defense of their position, because of a fault in the chain that was not strengthened by another *Ḥadīth*. He stated that, in his own assessment of the issue, the family of the deceased should be left alone with its grief for several days, and that the neighbors should prepare food for them up to three days, depending on the sorrow caused by the death of the deceased. Definitively, he stated that no celebratory meal should be held at that time.[73]

Although opposed to the celebratory meal on all occasions, Persis writers were especially concerned about religious recitations and prayers at the death meals specifically intended to aid the deceased. Traditionalist scholars maintained that non-obligatory prayers to obtain merit for the deceased at those gatherings was justified on the basis of several *Ḥadīth* that indicate that a young man could undertake the pilgrimage or the fast in the name of an older person unable to perform these religious requirements. By analogy, it was reasoned that other matters of religious merit might likewise be transferred. Persis writers denied that the practice of praying and

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[71] Hurgronje, *Achehnese*, I, 428; Sirajuddin Abbas, *40 Masalah Agama* (Jakarta, 1972), III, 207.

[72] *Sual-Djawab*, XII, 29–30.

[73] *Sual-Djawab*, VIII, 64–66.

reciting religious texts at the celebratory meal had any precedents in Islamic history. In a *fatwā* on the subject, Ahmad Hassan stated that neither the *Qur'ān* nor *Ḥadīth* commanded Muslims to engage in this practice, and that it was never performed by the Companions, by the Followers, by Followers of the Followers, or by any of the great teachers who founded the Sunnī schools of law, i.e., Mālik ibn Anas, al-Shāfi'ī, al-Ḥanbalī and Abī Ḥanīfa.[74] In an unsigned *fatwā*, a Persis writer quoted the opinions of prominent Makkah legalists as confirming this stand.[75] Ahmad Hassan also rejected the contention that merit obtained by one Muslim could under any circumstances be transferred to another Muslim, and particularly to the deceased. He stated that there was no clear reference in the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* to this problem and maintained that, in order for a specific practice of religious worship to have merit, it must be defined in those sources. ". . . Every reading and action may be said to be good if it is performed according to the time and conditions defined by Religion." Since there is no set procedure of worship prescribed for performance in the house of the bereaved, such action cannot be regarded as producing merit for those who perform the practice. Ahmad Hassan also denied that merit could be passed to the dead, stating that reason impels one to realize that only one's own actions can cleanse one from personal sins. In a rhetorical question, he queried whether, if it were possible to transfer merit from one person to another, why God had made worship compulsory at all, since He could have transferred merit from anyone who had it to anyone who needed it without any worship having been performed at all? He argued further that if merit could be transferred to the dead, why not also to the living?[76] Finally, he cited *An-Najm* 39 and *Yā Sīn* 54, both of which make reference to God's judging only on the basis of that which the individual personally has done.[77]

2. *Magic, Soothsaying and Amulets*

The three writers regarded belief in magic, soothsaying and amulets, so popular in Indonesia, as evidence of polytheism, that is, ascribing the powers of God to other than God, since these practices recog-

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[74] *Sual-Djawab*, VIII, 62–63.
[75] *Sual-Djawab*, XII, 32–33.
[76] *Sual-Djawab*, VIII, 63–64.
[77] *Pembela Islam*, 59 (March 9, 1933), 39.

nized that certain people had the power to alter and affect human lives in a manner usually reserved to God. In *Unity of God*, for example, Ahmad Hassan warned Muslims not to invoke secret oaths and curses meant to harm and cause loss to other persons. In this obvious attack on the practitioners of magic he also warned Muslims not to invoke the aid of "creatures and objects believed to have miraculous power," for favors like "asking for a child, asking to be liked by people, [and] asking to become rich." He clarified that there was no harm in wanting those things, which he regarded as natural human desires, but maintained that such requests should be asked only of God, and that to ask them of other "creatures and objects" was to place such "creatures and objects" on a par with God. Ahmad Hassan pointedly stated that any person who made such a comparison was an idolater, and that his very standing as a Muslim and a believer was in jeopardy. In a very pointed reference to such practice he stated that ". . . not a few people in Indonesia ask favors at graves considered to be holy, even as there are those who ask favors of holy relics, such as guns, stone structures or revered pieces of wood."[78]

Moehammad Munir, in a *fatwā* on a related subject, admonished Muslims not to confuse the practices of the practitioners, particularly in regard to amulets, with proper religious behavior. He stressed that even though the practitioner attempted to associate amulets with Islam by including *Qur'ānic* texts and religious phrases, such practices had no religious foundation whatsoever and were to be disregarded as a means of obtaining spiritual aid. He warned particularly against the practice of reciting a portion of *Surah Yā Sīn* before a container of water and then using the water as a medicine to cure a sick person.[79] Hadji Mahmud 'Aziz supported this view on the subject and cited "amulets, charms and blessed objects" as being in the category which constitute idolatry.[80]

3. *Mysticism and Its Practice*

The Persatuan Islam legalists generally held mysticism suspect, whether autochthonous or Muslim in origin, and maintained that it was at best, innovation in worship, and at its worst, idolatry. They viewed

[78] Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, 48–49, 51.
[79] *Sual-Djawab*, III, 39–41; Geertz, *Religion*, 87.
[80] *Sual-Djawab*, IV, 25–26.

the mysticism undertaken by the Muslim mystical orders as far removed from the simplicity and purity of early Muslim mystical practice because of the alien customs that had been absorbed,[81] and the emphasis on mystical performance to the exclusion of other religious obligations. Specifically they attacked the Muslim mystic's contention that mystical experience revealed "the truth of a thing," and was therefore more important than the regular manner of worship, i.e., prayer, fasting and the pilgrimage. Absorbed in the observance of correct religious behavior, they regarded the frequent omission of prescribed religious ritual by mystics as contrary to standard Islamic practice and the substitution of mystical practice in the place of regular worship as clear innovation. The proper role for mysticism, according to Persis legalists, was for mystics to recognize the overriding importance of proper ritual and to abandon those practices not in accord with *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah.* Hadji Mahmud 'Aziz concluded that the proper role for mysticism was not the all-embracing institution it had developed into over the centuries, but only a process to prepare human souls for worship, and to allow religious contemplation.[82]

Persis legalists had little to say about the mystical practices of practitioners of magic since such personalities were regarded as outside Islam.[83] In separate *fatāwā*, however, both Moehammad Munir and Ahmad Hassan stated that recitation of the *dhikr*, although a good act, had no validity unless performed at the proper time and in the proper place.[84] Presumably this argument was used as a condemnation of the practitioner's practice of repeating the *dhikr* in preparations for the healing functions he or she undertook. Persis legalists probably believed, however, that reform in the Muslim mystical brotherhoods would define the limits of mystical practice acceptable to Islam, and clearly indicate that other mystical practices outside such defined limits were not to be associated with Islam at all.

4. *Intercession and Saint Worship*

Persis legalists regarded saint worship as unIslamic and attacked the practice in several decisions, in several magazine articles, and in at least one major theological work.[85] In general, the Persis attack cen-

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[81] *Sual-Djawab*, I, 31.
[82] *Sual-Djawab*, I, 31.
[83] *Sual-Djawab*, IV, 25–26.
[84] *Sual-Djawab*, VIII, 62; 5, 37.
[85] *Pembela Islam*, 61 (May 1933), 23–26.

tered on the problem of intercession and on what was regarded as the proper manner in which Muslims were permitted to visit and pray at tombs. In *The Unity of God*, Ahmad Hassan stated that the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* command that prayer be addressed directly to God without any such formula as "with the blessing of the Prophet."[86] He further stated that during the Prophet's lifetime, the Companions asked Muḥammad to pray for them but "after he died they did not ever ask his spirit, or at his grave . . ."[87] to undertake this function. However, the actual practice of the Companions was to ask a leading member of their group to conduct prayers on their behalf, and that member then prayed direct to God and never invoked the Prophet as an intercessor.[88]

According to Ahmad Hassan, these two clarifications, i.e., the virtual prohibition of intercession in the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*, and its non-existence among the Companions, also clarifies the matter of intercession with the names of holy men. Prayers should not be "clothed with intercession, such as: 'O God, grant me . . . with the blessedness of the Apostle of God or 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī,[89] or others.'"[90] Ahmad Hassan gave further clarification of this issue in a short magazine article, where he stated that the problem of intercession has plagued humans for centuries, and that the scholars have constantly asserted that intercession is not permitted in Islam. Despite such continual elaboration, many Muslims still have a compulsion to believe that intercession may be valid. Ahmad Hassan concurred with the scholars' consensus and noted that widespread belief in intercession could recreate conditions existing in Arabia immediately prior to the arrival of Islam when humans built idols to intercede for them with God and then turned to worshiping the idols themselves.[91]

Persis writers pointed to two groups—the Muslim mystics and the 'Alawī Arabs—that it regarded as particularly guilty of perpetuating the doctrine of intercession and leading to the worship at the tombs of "holy men." Persis writers stated that the Muslim mystic's practice of a novice relying completely on the spiritual guidance of his teacher to discover the path to God was a form of intercession. This

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[86] *Sual-Diawab*, III, 15.
[87] Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, 50.
[88] *Sual-Djawab*, III, 15.
[89] The founder of the Qādiriyya Order, one of the foremost and long-lasting mystical movements in Islam.
[90] Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, 50–52.
[91] *Sual-Djawab*, I, 21–22.

dependence, Persis writers claimed, often placed the teacher in an exalted position and led to the growth of a cult centering on the person of famous mystics, first by the novices and later by other Muslims as well. After their deaths, not infrequently, the tombs of these mystics became sites of visitation where Muslims asked the interred mystic to seek intercession for them with God.[92] A writer in *Islamic Defender* in 1933 saw a similar development caused by the 'Alawī Arabs' claim to special blessing and position among Muslims and their claim of direct descent from the Prophet Muḥammad. The writer noted that several cults had grown up around 'Alawī personages, such as Shaykh Habshi Hadramauti, who used his claim to special blessing as a descendent of the Prophet to reinforce his high position as mystic master. Persis writers strongly attacked the 'Alawī practice of encouraging Muslims to visit the tombs of 'Alawī personages to pray for the intercession with God.[93]

Notwithstanding these condemnations of intercession, Ahmad Hassan stated that visiting tombs is permissible for Muslims when done in line with general Muslim modes of conduct. He described the purpose of the visit as to pray for the deceased and to "recall the Hereafter," and stated that prayers in the graveyard should not be to aid a specific deceased Muslim—which could be done elsewhere—but should be of a general nature and should call for God's blessing on all dead believers. Here again, Ahmad Hassan warned against innovation and cautioned Muslims not to adhere to a regular schedule in their visits, and to avoid visiting particular graves, on the grounds that firm *Ḥadīth* did not describe or define any established procedure in the matter.[94]

5. *Classical Javanese and Popular Theaters*

The attitude of the Persatuan Islam regarding the classical Javanese shadow theater performed with puppets and its counterpart performed by human actors, was not precisely addressed in the primary works of its major writers. In a single reference pertinent to the subject, Ahmad Hassan stated that it was strongly forbidden for women

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[92] *Sual-Djawab*, I, 31.

[93] *Pembela Islam*, 61 (May 9, 1933), 23–27; Noer, "Rise," 89; Hurgronje, *Achehnese*, II, 288–300.

[94] *Sual-Djawab*, II, 21–22.

to appear in public in the garb of men, an opinion perhaps aimed against those employing humans, where women played all roles, both those of men and women.[95] The organization's viewpoint toward the classical Javanese theater, however, was probably not fundamentally different from most other purist Sunnī groups which rejected this art form, so popular among the Javanese, on the basis that it was opposed to Islam because of its Hindu content. The Javanese theater had strong roots in the non-Islamic Javanese past, and the plots and content of the performances usually revolved about tales and allegories from Hindu and early Javanese tradition; all factors accounting for their distastefulness for strict Muslim groups.[96] At the same time there was earlier precedent for use of shadow puppets by Sunan Kalijaga, a legendary missionary to the Javanese in the fourteenth century, who adopted the tales of the theater to Muslim themes and used them as a proselytizing device. While the work of Sunan Kalijaga was much discussed, with considerable approval, later in the twentieth century among Muslim intellectuals, his work was not much stressed by Muslim writers of the 1930's.

As for the popular theater, that is, the stage play similar to that found in the West, the Persatuan Islam expressed only a slightly more tolerant attitude. Hadji Mahmud ʿAziz maintained that it was forbidden for Muslims to see and act in such plays because of the free association of men and women in them, which violated Islamic social ethics. As support for his viewpoint, he cited a *Ḥadīth*, recorded by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, stating that a good Muslim will not be together alone with a woman not his relative, "because the third person there is a demon."[97] Ahmad Hassan defined the problem somewhat differently, and stated that all plays in which men and women (the women not being related to the men) performed could not be seen by men. However, plays in which men alone act, or in which men with women who are their relatives act could be seen by women.[98] However, in the field of entertainment, theory was quite different from actual practice, and it was not uncommon among Muslim groups, including members of the Persatuan Islam, to see

[95] *Pembela Islam*, 60 (April 1933), 33.
[96] McVey, *Indonesia*, 438–47; Koentjaraningrat, *Culture*, 286–287, 298–299.
[97] *Sual-Djawab*, I, 27–28.
[98] *Pembela Islam*, 60 (April 1933), 33.

stage plays and movies without undue concern for religiously unwarranted association of men and women among the actors.[99]

The Persatuan Islam regarded the use of the drum and Javanese orchestra (*gamelan*) as dependent upon the occasion of their use. The practice had grown up in the early days of Islam in the Archipelago of using both of these musical instruments to attract the Indonesians to Islam, and it became the common practice at many mosques throughout Indonesia to use them for the call to worship.[100] Hadji Mahmud 'Aziz stated that this particular practice was an innovation in religious matters and maintained that drums might not be used to call people to worship, since the Prophet had rejected all means except the call using the human voice.[101] Neither said much about the permitted use of the orchestra.

Finally, there were several other customs found among the Indonesians that the Persatuan Islam viewed as incompatible with Islam. The practice of men wearing gold and silver ornaments, quite popular on Java, was judged by Ahmad Hassan as wrong, because, according to a *Ḥadīth*, the Prophet had not allowed it, although he was unsure of whether the act was actually forbidden or merely "reprehensible" [102] He pointed out, however, that for the most part there were no restrictions on the clothing worn by a Muslim, that there was no dress peculiar to a Muslim, and, except for the minor restriction on gold in clothing, Muslims had the greatest latitude in wearing apparel. On the same basis, i.e., restriction by a *Ḥadīth*, the Persatuan Islam also rejected the Indonesian custom of women thinning their eyebrows and filing their front teeth, both practices common throughout the Archipelago at an earlier time as a means to enhance feminine beauty.[103]

These particular customs were representative of the problems that Muslims faced in Indonesia in implementing their religion, i.e., replacing those customs that were objectionable to Islam, and realigning the loyalty of Indonesians from their own customs to that of Islam and the sacred law. Ahmad Hassan, as we have already stated above

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[99] See *Hudjdjatul Islam*, I, 1 (August 1956), 41.
[100] Landon, *Southeast Asia*, 149.
[101] *Sual-Djawab*, V, 28.
[102] *Pembela Islam*, 56 (December 1932), 39–40; *Sual-Djawab*, VI, 8; Landon, *Southeast*, 153.
[103] *Sual-Djawab*, XI, 5–6.

concerning his religious belief, believed that the sacred law was not intended to totally displace custom—and in several *fatāwā* on the legality of specific customs he restated his belief that many customary practices could stand alongside the sacred law.[104] It was apparent, however, by the large number of objections he and his fellow legalists had to celebratory meals, the classical Javanese theater, practitioners of magic and and wearing ornamentation that Ahmad Hassan believed custom would be acceptable only in a thoroughly altered form and totally subservient to sacred law. In the final analysis, it seems that the Persatuan Islam's viewpoint on this matter was not really greatly different from the attitude of the traditionalist scholars of the Middle East, who allowed common practice a significant place in law, but also claimed to reject that portion of custom it found in conflict with the revealed law of God.[105]

6. *Some Considerations*

The Persatuan Islam's approach to Indonesian customary values and practices had a somewhat different basis than the approach of Western scholars dealing with these matters. Taking G.A. Wilken, writing in the nineteenth century, and C. Geertz, who wrote in the twentieth—that is two anthropologists working in Indonesia before and after this period,—we see different perceptions of Indonesian society. Wilken saw the Malay world as marked by a pervasive belief in animism and traced its influence into the leading social institutions of the day. Believing that this influence existed prior to the arrival of the major world religions, he maintained that its hold had been strong enough to influence the manner that these religions had been accepted and that religious value existed only in so far as they incorporated animism into the rites, practices and beliefs of those religions. Hence Hinduism and Buddhism, both with rites drawing on the same sources as animism, did this in spreading their influence in Southeast Asia, and Islam willy-nilly followed the same path. Wilken saw animism as fundamental and beneficial to the Malay Indonesian peoples and as the defining aspect of their social and legal system. From this line of thinking the work of Hurgronje and van Vollenhoven in emphasizing the importance of custom over Islam

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[104] *Sual-Djawab* XIII, 72; *Sual-Djawab*, II, 4–8.

[105] Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammedan Jurisprudence* (Oxford, 1950), 61–69.

in legal development took place.[106] The writers of the Persatuan Islam saw the problem as a mirror reflection of the Wilken explanation; that is, they recognized the existence of animistic practices and beliefs in Indonesian society, but they saw Islam as the defining condition, not animism. As such the continuation of animism in social institutions was the result of an incomplete conversion to Islam. What was needed was a new campaign to ferret out instances of such animism when they conflicted with Islamic belief, behavior, and ritual and to remove them with dispatch. Indonesian society would be better off with the reforms. Hence, there was some agreement with Wilken on the existence of animism, but not on its nature or its benefit to Indonesian society.

Geertz's views, coming after this period, probably would not have been accepted by the Persatuan Islam either. Here Geertz saw the heavy influence of Islam in a group he termed *santri* standing alongside other major groupings in society he termed *priyayi* or officialdom, and *abangan* or popular Javans, with both of these groups concerned about Islam only in so far as they could be integrated into their own systems without undue alteration of base values. In this system the heavily Islamicized *santri* group was regarded as involved in competition with these other groupings, particularly that of the popular Javans, who are heavily influenced by pre-Islamic values going back to Buddhism, Hinduism and ultimately animism.[107] Later, in the second half of the century, this view of Islam and Indonesian culture was to be highly influential and mark the writings of many scholars. Persis writers, however, never saw such a division of Indonesian society, always arguing that 90% of the inhabitants were Muslim and the remaining 10% belonged to Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. Hence, if there were divisions in the 90%, these were internal to Islam and should be adjudicated in the community itself, always on the basis that Islam was fundamental to the entire group.

Among the religious writers of the times, the Persatuan Islam is closest to Rashīd Riḍā who used the *al-Manār* magazine as a vehicle for preaching against innovation which appeared in saint worship, the inclusion of the *dhikr* in all sorts of popular practices, the

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[106] G.A. Wilken, *Handleiding voor vergelijkende volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* (Leiden, 1893), 544–562.

[107] Geertz, *Religion*, 5–7.

display of holy relics and the usage of religious epitaphs and symbols in folk medicine. Here we find a closeness in spirit and in argumentation, even though the practices between Indonesia and Egypt differed significantly.[108] Mawdūdī saw folk practices in the same sort of light, but this was not a major point of his effort.

C. *Religious Threats to Sunnī Islam*

1. *The Ahmadiyah Qadiyan*

The Persis dispute with the Ahmadiyah Qadiyan centered on the Muslim beliefs concerning prophets and whether it was possible for one to be sent by God after Muhammad's mission. Almost without exception Sunnī Muslims have been consistent in denying that such a person would appear. Persis activists, writers and legalists strongly supported this position, which was in keeping with most other Muslim organizations in Indonesia, both modernist and traditionalist. From newspaper and magazine references to talks, speeches and sermons given by Persis activists, it is clear that the issue was one of great concern to the members of the Persatuan Islam and of considerable discussion within the Muslim society of the time. The Persis arguments are thoroughly outlined in the records of the two debates between Ahmad Hassan and Rahmat 'Ali in 1933 and 1934, which were subsequently published in pamphlet form.[109] In several later works Ahmad Hassan also included a refutation of specific Ahmadiyah beliefs. In *Prophethood*, for example, he pointedly attacked the belief that Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet,[110] and his objections to Qadiyan belief concerning the Prophet 'Īsā were succinctly outlined in an opinion titled "Prophets who are still living."[111]

Ghulam Ahmad's claim to prophethood rested on an interpretation of *al-Aḥzāb* 41 which stated that Muḥammad was the seal of the prophets. He disputed generally-held Sunnī Muslim belief that this verse indicated that Muḥammad was the last prophet and claimed that the verse only indicated that Muḥammad was the last prophet who would bring sacred law to humankind. The Ahmadiyah claimed

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[108] Adams, *Islam*, 189–192.
[109] Hamka, *Ajahku*, 112–113.
[110] Hassan, *An-Nubuwwah*, 11.
[111] *Sual-Djawab*, XII, 80–86.

that other prophets not bringing a law could appear, and that Ghulam Ahmad was such a prophet who was sent to reform religion and reactivate the sacred law given to the human race through Muḥammad.[112] Ahmad Hassan challenged this contention by stating that the indicated verse had been misinterpreted by the Ahmadiyah Qadiyan, that it did not differentiate between types of prophets, but indicated only that Muḥammad was the last of the prophets of any kind. In his 1933 debate with Rahmat ʿAli, Ahmad Hassan suggested that references to prophets with and without sacred law was not a confusion between two Arabic words, "messenger" (*rasūl*) and "prophet" (*nabī*), as the Qadiyan maintained, since the two words had become almost interchangeable in Muslim theological terminology.[113] In *Prophethood*, he flatly rejected Ghulam Ahmad's claim by stating, "There has not been a single prophet [since Muḥammad] either with or without sacred law."[114]

The Ahmadiyah Qadiyan claimed that a new prophet was necessary in order to fulfill references in *Ḥadīth* to the return of the messiah—generally referred to as the Prophet ʿĪsā by Sunnī scholars,—on the Day of Judgment to play a prominent role at the resurrection of the dead. The Ahmadiyah did not dispute the validity of the belief that the messiah would appear on judgment day, but claimed that the Prophet ʿĪsā had died "as did all other prophets" and that the messiah designated for the final judgment role was actually Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.[115] In a *fatwā* on this topic, Ahmad Hassan noted that all *Ḥadīth* dealing with ʿĪsā's return on judgment day were weak, and could be rejected as the basis for doctrine according to the generally recognized rules of *Ḥadīth* examination. Ahmad Hassan stated that to reject these *Ḥadīth*, however would leave unexplained several references in the *Qur'ān* to ʿĪsā's existence as a mortal in God's presence. For that reason alone, he saw value in considering them as valid *Ḥadīth* but contended that there was no reference in any one of them to Ghulam Ahmad as "ʿĪsā" or "*al-masīḥ*."[116]

In his presentation, Rahmat ʿAli also cited several *Qur'ānic* verses as proof that ʿĪsā was actually dead and could not be the messiah

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[112] Hamka, *Ajahku*, 110.
[113] *Pembela Islam*, 61 (May 1933), 29.
[114] Hassan, *An-Nubuwwah*, 11.
[115] *Pembela Islam*, 61, 37.
[116] *Sual-Djawab*, XII, 82–83.

mentioned in the *Ḥadīth*. He quoted *al-Mā'idah* implying that all messengers including 'Īsā were mortal, and *Al-'Imrān* which states that all prophets before Muḥammad were dead, as proof of his contention. Ahmad Hassan countered that such references were general in nature, but that *al-Nisā'* 158 stating, "but Allāh raised him up unto Himself" was a more specific reference to 'Īsā. Ahmad Hassan stated that all references to 'Īsā's return on Judgment Day indicated that he existed as a mortal in the presence of God, for they used the words "will descend." "It is clear" concluded Ahmad Hassan, "that the Prophet 'Īsā has been taken up and will descend. If we say: 'He will descend,' certainly then he exists above!"[117]

In another argument, the Ahmadiyah Qadiyan used reason instead of *Qur'ān* to establish its position on 'Īsā. This argument stated that "prophets have physical bodies as other men and are not able to live without food. If 'Īsā lives in heaven, certainly he must eat and drink and have bowel movements. . . ." Moreover, the argument ran, there were matters of spiritual concern as well as bodily functions to be considered, such as "where does he face when he prays, for in heaven there is no ordered direction of prayer? Moreover, is there anyone in the blue heaven to whom to give the poor tax?"[118] Ahmad Hassan responded to this argument by stating that while there certainly were difficulties for a person existing in heaven in physical form, it was not beyond God's power to accommodate to such a situation. "Is it inconceivable for a person to be taken by Allāh to a star!? No, not ever! It is not inconceivable that Allāh would take all humankind to another world. But because this has not happened before our eyes, then we feel the matter is exceedingly difficult.[119] As a further example, Ahmad Hassan stated that sixty years previously it was generally believed that to go from Bandung to Jakarta in forty-five minutes time was impossible, but with the advent of the airplane the trip took only half an hour. In a like manner, he maintained, other matters not familiar to humans could exist as well, and 'Īsā's sojourn in heaven could well be one of them.[120]

It is apparent that the arguments by Ahmad Hassan were rational within the tradition of Sunnī Islam and that those arguments

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[117] *Ibid.*, 82.
[118] *Pembela Islam*, 61, 38, 40.
[119] *Sual-Djawab*, XII, 82.
[120] *Ibid.*

depended on the Sunnī mind set in order for them to be acceptable to the audience. Strikingly, Rahmat Ali had a reasonable case within the conundrums of Sunnī theology, but the case was based on challenging the supremacy of the Prophet Muḥammad as the most important messenger of Islam. Given the strength of belief about the Prophet, Muslims were not likely to abandon or mitigate the view that he was the Seal of the Prophets. All Ahmad Hassan had to do is put up a logical defense on the other matters and he would have the support of the Sunnī community. This he did, and although Rahmat Ali made several telling points, it was not enough to win the support of much of the audience assembled to hear the debates.

2. *Christianity*

The tone of the Persis commentary on Christianity is intense, defensive and retaliatory, and it is apparent in the articles, *fatāwā* and major writings that activists saw Christian missionary activity as a serious threat to the existence of Islam in Indonesia. We have already seen in the *Islamic Defender* some very trenchant comments in regard to Christian missionaries and their endeavors in Indonesia. Persis activists stayed alert to Christian propaganda and outreach activity and made responses in the name of the Indonesian Muslim community. This role of spokesman was given more acknowledged recognition when the Persatuan Islam joined MIAI in 1939, for it was given the specific task of responding to threats to the religion from outside sources, meaning largely, perceived threats from Christianity. In response to a specific MIAI request in 1940, Ahmad Hassan wrote *The Divinity of Jesus according to the Bible*, as a response to the remarks of Christian activists in regard to Islam, which were regarded by Muslims as slanderous and demeaning. Ahmad Hassan took the tact of replying to Christian claims of divinity for Christ and reasserting the basic Muslim position that he was simply a prophet. The following composite of Persis arguments against Christianity draws heavily on Ahmad Hassan's book on Jesus and his study of prophets, but also reflects other Persis writers in their articles and *fatāwā* appearing in *Islamic Defender* and *The Voice*.

Persatuan Islam writers maintained that holy writ had been revealed to Jesus in the same manner that the *Qur'ān* had been revealed to Muḥammad, but complained that the *Old* and *New Testaments* bore no relationship to the *Tawrāh* and *Injīl* mentioned in the *Qur'ān*

because of modifications and falsifications made by Jews and Christians. A Persis writer in *Voice* in 1935 stated that the *New Testament* of the Christians did not contain a single qualification as a holy book. "The original book does not exist, the authors are not known, the contents are far from fitting, and one portion conflicts with another in a great many cases."[121] Elucidating this point further, Ahmad Hassan in *Divinity of Jesus* stated that Christians completely misunderstood references in the *Bible* to the mission of Jesus. He maintained that Jesus was a prophet like other prophets before him and Muḥammad after him, and that he had not been crucified to take away the sins of humankind. He suggested that excessive devotion of Christians to the personality of Jesus led to an exaggeration of Jesus' prophetic role in the belief that he was actually God. ". . . [Muslims] do not believe in Jesus[122] as God, nor as part divine, nor as the son of God, nor as a form combining God and humanness. We only believe he is a person, prophet and apostle, who was free from sin as were other prophets, and we do not believe that he was crucified, especially crucified to cut away the sins of humans."[123]

Ahmad Hassan claimed that several expressions in the *New Testament* had been poorly translated into European languages: "Lord," "Christ the Lord," and "son of God," were actually titles of respect and probably only referred to Christ's relationship with God—a relationship not exclusively belonging to Jesus alone, but to others as well. ". . . And there are a great many more verses from the *Bible* indicating that 'Father' means 'God,' and 'son' means a person loved by God."[124] David and Adam were also described in Christian and Hebrew scripture as having this same special relationship with God. Likewise, he argued, biblical references to the "holy spirit" really meant "a clean spirit, (i.e.) not a devil." He admitted that a "clean spirit" may have been the device employed in the immaculate conception but stated in his *fatwā* that none of the several references to the "holy spirit" in the *Old* and *New Testaments* made the holy spirit identical with God. In *Prophethood*, Ahmad Hassan, arguing from the

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[121] *Al-Lisan*, 1 (December 1935), 19.

[122] In this set of quotes the name "Jesus" is used, even though "Isa" is usually used in the writings of Ahmad Hassan and his colleagues. Obviously this particular work was written with an expectation that Christians would read it.

[123] Hassan, *Jesoes*, 5, 2; *Sual-Djawab*, 4, 16–18.

[124] Hassan, *Jesoes*, 26.

context of the legitimacy of the Prophet Muḥammad's mission, maintained that Christ's references to a "comforter" in the 16th chapter of *St. John*, were direct references to Muḥammad, and not to the holy spirit as is generally held among Christians. He stated that the root meaning of the word *paraclet*, the Greek word for "comforter," means" a person who is very much praised," i.e., the same meaning as the name Muḥammad in Arabic.[125]

Persis writers regarded the Christian belief in the crucifixion of Christ for the expiation of sins as totally wrong. Ahmad Hassan lamented, "Does God not know any other way to save humankind except by the sacrifice of flesh and blood?" "Would it not have been easier for Him to forgive humankind [its sins] without shedding the blood of His son? . . ." Even in the story of the crucifixion Persis writers noted what they considered contradictions. They wondered how Jesus could be God and still be killed, when life is an attribute of God. It was equally incomprehensible that Jesus, if he were truly God, could know fear, as when tempted by Satan and while upon the cross, when according to Muslim theological speculation fear is foreign to God's character.[126] Finally, Persis writers regarded the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as beyond their comprehension—a view not uncommon to most non-Christians. "We and all people of the world are not able to fathom the extraordinary method of algebra [used by] the Christians. For instance, how can one equal three and three equal one."[127] To the members of the Persatuan Islam, as to nearly all Muslim writers, the entire concept of the Trinity violated the theme of divine unity so prevalent in Muslim theological thinking.

Persis writers saw Christian missions as a threat to Islam in Indonesia, but like many other Indonesian Muslims, they occasionally accorded the missions grudging respect. In an unsigned article entitled "Christianity in Indonesia works and Islam merely gapes," an Persis writer noted that Muslims were no match for Christian missions, which had "wealth, energy and spirit" and were able to influence young Indonesians in matters of religion through the schools they operated. Muslims on the other hand, the article noted, were dis-

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[125] Hassan, *An-Nubuwwah*, 213.
[126] Hassan, *Jesoes*, 34–35.
[127] *Ibid.*, 12.

organized, disinterested and badly led. The Islamic effort "is organized willy-nilly, its capital is the turban, the rosary, and amulet, it prefers mysticism and sleeping in the religious schools, and it has, for the greater part . . . totally ignorant leaders." According to the article, it was such Muslim shortcomings that aided Christian inroads on Islam and strengthened the Dutch hold on Indonesia. The article concluded that to be successful against a dynamic Christianity, Islam would have to create a new image, characterized by unity of purpose, with emphasis on education and leadership that had capability and knowledge.[128] Undoubtedly, the Persatuan Islam believed that Muslim acceptance of the fundamentalist principles it advocated would aid considerably in the development of that new image.

3. *Some Observations*

Muḥammad ʿAbduh engaged in newspaper debate with Christian writers who took up the issue of comparison of Islam and Christianity in the early years of the twentieth century. For the most part the Christian writers set the tone, making comparisons about freedom of thinking in religion, about general tolerance of outsiders and about the basic nature of different religions. ʿAbduh, of course, defended Islam from a modernist perspective, and accordingly declared Islam to espouse freedom of thought and action, saw its treatment of scholars, Muslim and non-Muslim, to have been historically progressive, and saw Islam as the highest manifestation of religion combining the virtues of all previous religions, especially Judaism and Christianity. The debate was with Western writers, primarily from France, and there appears to have been no inclusion of local Christian community of the Middle East in the discussion. Accordingly, it appears that the nature of the Christian "threat" was somewhat different than in the Indonesian case outlined above and the response to Christian attacks were taken as an opportunity to respond intellectually. The debate was not seen as a threat coming from within the society itself as the Persatuan Islam regarded the threat from Indonesian Christians and Christian missionaries.[129] The Ahmadiyah were not on the scene during ʿAbduh's lifetime, nor were they much of an issue for his disciple Rashīd Riḍā, probably because Ahmadiyah activity has been

[128] *Pembela Islam*, 71 (May 1935), 3–5.
[129] Adams, *Islam*, 86–90.

centered in South Asia. Hence there is little similarity of Persis efforts with those of the Middle Eastern reformers on these matters.

Mawdūdī's reaction to the Ahmadiyah was not essentially different than that of the Persatuan Islam in one sense, in that he opposed them as outside the pale of Sunnī Islam and his opposition was publicly demonstrated with an article condemning them. Later he organized a public action organization to oppose them. His arguments against the Ahmadiyah were standard responses made by other Sunnī writers in Pakistan, but he did eventually—much later in time—come to the view that, because of the large number of them existing in the country, that they should be given recognized minority status. However, his first efforts to oppose them with a public action committee produced riots and the deaths of many people, particularly among the Ahmadi's, and he was arrested for his role in the activities.[130] All of this happened later in the early years of the Pakistani republic in the 1950's. As to Christianity, Mawdūdī saw them properly as "Peoples of the Book" who were to be respected within a Muslim state, but who could have no political rights within that state, where political power and choice were reserved for Muslims. The threat from outside Islam that affected Mawdūdī was the Hindu community and elite in India before partition which, to his mind, threatened the future of Muslims and would prevent them from establishing a Muslim community complete with political power of its own.[131] Here there is some similarity of feeling, although the intensity of opposition is not as pronounced by the South Asian reformer as by the Persatuan Islam.

D. *Assessment of Traditionalist Islam*

The argumentation against traditionalist Muslims was sharp and constituted a major theme in the activities of the Persatuan Islam. All of the movement's magazines spoke out against traditionalist Islam as a problem for the health of the Islamic community, referring to

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[130] Charles J. Adams, "The Ideology of Mawlana Mawdudi" in *South Asian Politics and Religion*, ed. by Donald E. Smith (Princeton, 1966)," 377; Khalid bin Sayeed, "Islam and National Integration in Pakistan" in *South Asian Politics and Religion*, ed. by Donald E. Smith (Princeton, 1966), 402–404.

[131] Adams, "Ideology," 387–388.

it as old-fashioned, unable to adjust itself to new ways of thinking, and obstinate in its insistence on resisting the fundamentalist reforms proposed by the Persatuan Islam. The general attack was undertaken by all of the activists of the organization, but much of the theoretical work was formulated by Ahmad Hassan in the debates he had with traditionalists Muslim leaders in the 1930s. The transcripts of those exchanges laid out the basic differences in the traditionalist and fundamentalist viewpoints. At a more technical level of exact differences, however, it was the *fatāwā* that spelled out the specific arguments. Here also Ahmad Hassan, supported by several other writers, provided the basic viewpoint and theoretical framework for the movement's stance on such issues. A complete book on the subject was not published by the Persatuan Islam until after the era was over, but the arguments in that book, titled *Concerning the Schools of Jurisprudence*, reflected the arguments used in the 1930's and contained other information dating to the era as well.

1. *Anti-"Imitation"*

The Persatuan Islam's historical interpretation maintained that the Muslim schools of law had their beginnings about the end of the first century A.H., and that they only arose because of the circumstances prevailing in that period.[132] According to this rendition, during the lifetime of the Prophet, and throughout the first century, Muslims fulfilled their legal requirements in both "matters of worship and behavior" by referring to the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. At the beginning of the second century, the most knowledgeable group concerning Islam, the Companions, were all dead, and the few Followers (first generation after Muḥammad) who remained were spread throughout the Islamic world. The situation arose whereby Muslims came to accept the judgments of the second generation after Muḥammad, the so called "followers of the followers," on matters of religious action. Such opinions were always based on *Qur'ān* and on *Ḥadīth* as had been related to the Second Generation by the previous generations. The founders of the great jurisprudential schools—Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik ibn Anas, al-Shāfi'ī and Ibn Ḥanbal—were all within this tradition, as were numerous others whose opinions have not been historically important because they were not recorded. These scholars

[132] *Hassan, al-Madz-hab*, 1–10.

operated under a great handicap, since the scattering of the Companions and the Followers during the Muslim conquests also scattered the complete record of Muḥammad's *Sunnah*. "It is clear," stated Ahmad Hassan in *Concerning the Schools of Jurisprudence*, "that no one of the four founders received the complete *Sunnah*, and also that they did not receive the same [material]. . . ."[133] This incomplete knowledge, combined with the natural tendency by the great scholars to err occasionally, account for the differences in the several legal schools. This "historical interpretation" formulated by Persis writers was at odds with the traditionalist Muslim assumption that the entire *Sunnah* of Muḥammad had been available to all four of the founders. The traditionalist Muslims, when indeed they thought about this problem, saw a line of authority between Muḥammad and the legal authority. There is no record of response to the Persis "interpretation as such, but it can reasonably be assumed that conservative Muslims, relying as they did on the line of authority of their schools, would reject a viewpoint that suggested that their founders did not have the complete message.

Based on its "historical interpretation," the Persatuan Islam questioned the need for the legal schools, especially when the first three generations of Muslims did not have them to rely on but had direct access to *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* for addressing their problems.[134] The writers of the Persatuan Islam argued that the four founders did not mean for others to follow their interpretations blindly, without checking their correctness according to the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. Their followers had ignored these admonitions and accepted the arguments and opinions of the founders as the basis for their own legal opinions. Increasingly, therefore, explained Persis writers, later legalists concentrated on studying the teaching of their own particular school of jurisprudence, and the source of religious law passed from the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* to the pronouncements of the legalist scholars of the various schools. Hence "imitation" (*ijtihād*) of those scholars ahead of them in time was deemed the correct way to analyze.[135]

The Persatuan Islam maintained that there was no clear reference in the *Qur'ān* or in *Ḥadīth* that ordered the use of "imitation" (*taqlīd*), and cited certain references in those two sources to indicate that

[133] *Ibid.*, 8.
[134] *Ibid.*, 33.
[135] *Ibid.*, 6.

imitation was, in fact, forbidden. *Banī Isrā'īl 36*, stating "Do not follow that which you do not know" was cited by Ahmad Hassan as a clear admonition by God for Muslims not to use imitation.[136] *Al-Tawbah 30*, and several *Ḥadīth* judged as genuine by Mālik ibn Anas, were also put forth as evidence.[137] One of those *Ḥadīth* reported the Prophet as stating that if one was commanded to do a wrong act he should refrain from performing it, that he should follow only those who command with the *Qur'ān*, and that if there was a dispute over any matter, that matter was to be referred to God (*Qur'ān*) and the Prophet, i.e., *Ḥadīth*.[138] The "wrong act" was interpreted by Ahmad Hassan as imitation. The *Ḥadīth* by Mālik ibn Anas stated: "There remain with you two matters which will not lead you astray so long as you keep hold of them, that is, the Book of God and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet."[139] On the basis of these references and others like them, the Persatuan Islam concluded that only *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* had any value in making fatāwā, "and nothing else, not the way of the Followers, that of the founders of the legal schools, that of Abū al-Ḥanīfa, or that of al-Shāfi'ī."[140]

In further polemic against the use of imitation in 1935, Persis writers published a pamphlet outlining twenty-one arguments supposedly advanced for imitation and the Persis refutations for each argument.[141] For example, the pamphlet took issue with the traditionalist interpretation of *Al-Nisā'* 59, which admonishes Muslims to obey those in authority over them. Supporters of imitation argued that those in authority included the religious scholars and that to refuse to accept their teachings, or to question the correctness of those teachings constituted disobedience. The Persatuan Islam retorted that the *Al-Nisā'* reference was concerned with secular affairs and was limited in scope to rulers, such as "caliphs, rajas, governors and

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[136] *Sual-Djawab*, 1, 15.

[137] *Al-Tawbah*, 9:30. ". . . They [the Jews and Christians] imitate the sayings of those who disbelieved of old. Allāh [Himself] fighteth against them. How perverse are they." The *ḥadīth* recorded by Ṭābāranī states: "Obey me so long as I am among you and keep hold of the book of God. You are permitted what it permits and forbidden what it forbids." Hassan, *al-Madz-hab*, 21–22.

[138] *Al-Lisan* (Extraordinary issue) (December 1935), 10.

[139] Hassan, *Risalah al-Madz-hab*, 22–24.

[140] *Ibid.*, 23.

[141] Persatuan Islam, *Debat Taqlied—A. Hassan dan H.A. Wahhab* (Bandung, 1935); *Al-Lisan*, 4 (March 1936), 28–30; 5 (April 1936), 35.

amirs" and that religious scholars were not included.[142] The pamphlet also cited *Al-Naḥl* 43, which states, "ask the followers of the Remembrance if ye know not," was a clear reference to the importance of the religious scholar and his teaching in religious matters and hence, by analogy, a justification for imitation. In its response, the Persatuan Islam recognized that the reference did cite the importance of the religious teacher, but noted as well that the verse did not command the Muslims to accept whatever teachings a religious scholar put forth. The reference, according to Persis writers, indicated that the religious scholar was to give an answer based on the *Qur'ān* and not on his own, or someone's else, speculation and belief.[143] In 1936 Persis writers responded to the Nahdlatul Ulama leader Machfoed Shiddieq in a similar fashion after he gave a lecture summarizing the Indian Muslim thinker Shāh Walīyullāh's *Resolution of the Matters of Difference*[144] which pointed out the value of the Companions of the Prophet as sources of interpretation for religious teachings. Shiddieq cited this work as a clear justification for the use of imitation and the indispensable role of the religious teacher. In response an editorial spokesman for *The Voice* pointed out that the book by Shāh Walīyullāh made no mention of the religious scholars as interpreters of religion, but referred only to the Companions' importance as transmitters of the *Sunnah*, an importance all modernist Muslims would readily recognize.[145]

2. *The Use of Fresh Examination*

Like other modenist Muslim groups, Persis activists favored the use of "fresh interpretation" (*ijtihād*), wherein the scholar examined the *Qur'ān* and firm *Ḥadīth* for the answers to questions of importance in religion without consideration of what previous scholars had decided. In practice Persis legalists did compare their own findings with those of previous scholars to make sure that they had not left

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[142] *Al-Nisā'* 59 states: "O ye who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority; and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allāh and the messenger if ye are [in truth] believers in Allāh and the Last Day. This is better and more seemly in the end." *Ibid.*, 1 (December 1935), 10–11.

[143] *Sual-Djawab*, 1, 15.

[144] *Al-insāf fī sebāb al-ikhtilāf. Al-Lisan*, 4 (March 1936), 28–30;. Cf. M.D. Rahbar, "Shah Wall Ullah and Ijtihad," *The Muslim World*, XLIV (1955), 346–358.

[145] *Al-Lisan*, 4 (March 1936), 29.

out important considerations. Still the new opinion was to be shaped by fresh interpretation itself. The Persatuan Islam believed that those not trained to undertake this fresh interpretation might rely on choosing among alternatives, whereby the opinions of several interpretations would be compared. The Persatuan Islam stated that the lay Muslims undertaking such comparison should secure several *fatāwā*, from scholars who listed specific references (i.e., *Qur'ān, Ḥadīth*, consensus of the scholars and analogy) as the basis for their *fatāwā*, and, after comparing such *fatāwā*, make their own decision as to which they would follow.[146] Persis writers stressed that the responsibility for the correctness of the decision lay with the giver of the original *fatwā* and the receiver did not sin if the decision was in error.[147] Machfoed Shiddieq had charged that such comparison gave the Muslim little opportunity to look into religious sources, and that the process was certainly below the level of the local religious scholar.[148] In replying to Shiddieq's argument, Islamic Persis writers stated that while "comparison" (*ittibā'*) was not a very learned type of religious research, it did promote individual investigation and discouraged total reliance on a single religious scholar. In a mock debate published by the Persatuan Islam, Ahmad Hassan chided the efforts of traditionalist Muslims to justify imitation on the basis of *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*. "I want you to realize that the teachers are not consistent in their viewpoint. They are smart enough to become "fresh interpreters" (*mujtahidīn*) while pursuing the justification for being an "imitator" (*muqallidīn*), but they do not want to become fresh interpreter to find the justification for becoming a fresh interpreter or a comparer of fresh interpretations."[149]

The Persatuan Islam's argument with traditionalists also included rejection of certain religious practices condoned by traditionalists, but considered by the Persatuan Islam and other modernists as "innovation" (*bid'ah*) The Persatuan Islam believed that innovation in matters of worship was not permissible, even if the change was seemingly good, since all matters of religious worship had been ordained by God Himself, and humans were unable to improve on that system of worship. Persis writers cited the "intention" (*niyyah*) at the opening

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[146] *Ibid.*, 29; Hassan, *al-Madz-hab*, 14.
[147] *Ibid.*
[148] Shiddiq, *Sekitar*, 59, 169.
[149] Hassan, *al-Madz-hab*, 35.

of regular prayer, the reciting of creeds and litanies during and after burial ceremonies, and the use of Arabic in the Friday sermon. They charged that traditionalists perpetuated innovation when they defended these practices. The sermon (*khuṭbah*), burial ceremony (*talqīn*), and "intention" are discussed here because they have represented major focal points of difference between the traditionalists and modernists from approximately 1910 until the present. A fourth point, the status of the Arabs among the Indonesian Muslims, was a special point of argument between the traditionalists and modernist Arab religious scholars residing in Indonesia. While this last point was actually a revolt by Malay/Indonesian Muslims against the status and prerogatives of Arab Muslims in the Malay/Indonesian world, the dispute took place within the same framework as the other matters of dispute, and Persis activists took part in the debate.

a. *The Language of the Friday Sermon*

Ahmad Hassan reflected the thinking of the modernist Muslims in two *fatāwā* concerning the recitation of the sermon. In them he explained the important difference between worship and custom as it affects Muslim behavior. Worship, as ritual established by God, must be performed as the Prophet set it down, and since formal worship utilized Arabic, Arabic had to be used. "The recitation of the opening chapter of the *Qur'ān*, the uttered prayers, the bendings and the prostrations are all included in this category, but other parts of the worship service, such as individual prayer and the advice were not fixed by the Prophet, had no exact form, and the language could, therefore, vary for the convenience of the worshiper."[150] In a second opinion, Ahmad Hassan took a rational, rather than a legal approach and stated that the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* commanded Muslims to "think and understand" and "revile those who do not think and know" when they read religious texts. He stated that the purpose of the sermon was to offer advice and allow religious reflection, a state that could only be attained if the sermon was understood by those listening to it. The Prophet Muḥammad delivered the sermon in Arabic, "because he was an Arab in an Arab land and the people he faced all understood Arabic," stated Ahmad Hassan, and added that there were no references in the *Qur'an* or *Ḥadīth* commanding that the ser-

[150] *Sual-Djawab*, VII, 22; *Sual-Djawab*, XII, 58–59.

mon had to be given in Arabic to the exclusion of other languages.[151]

Ahmad Hassan concluded that the entire argument was really conditional on the status of Arabic as the official language of the Muslims. He maintained that if it could be argued that the sermon must be delivered only in Arabic because the Prophet delivered his sermons in Arabic, then it could also be argued that Muslims must speak only Arabic and no other language, since the Prophet spoke only Arabic. Ahmad Hassan admitted that, while knowledge of Arabic is necessary for study of religious sources, it is not required for everyday usage in Indonesia. He speculated that if a single Muslim community existed, Arabic would undoubtedly be its official language, and the recitation of the sermon in Arabic would then be logical. In an allusion to the fractionalized situation in the Muslim world and the great obstacles to Muslim unity, he concluded that "in this time, here [in Indonesia] if a person teaches only in Arabic, he will not succeed."[152]

b. *Prompting at the Grave*

The Persatuan Islam believed that "prompting" (*talqīn*) at the grave was a meaningless ritual that Muslims would do well to cast aside. In this practice a person recited all the major doctrines of Islam so that the deceased would be prepared for interrogation by angels sent for that purpose. During the early 1930's, *Islamic Defender* and *Legal Decision* frequently printed *fatāwā* and articles critical of the traditionalists' position on this subject, which consequently drew heavy criticism from activists in the traditionalist associations, notably the 'Alawī Association and the Nahdlatul Ulama.[153] In an earlier chapter it was stated that on at least one occasion Persatuan Islam leaders met with Nahdlatul Ulama activists to debate the validity of "prompting" as a proper Islamic ceremony. In an *fatwā* on the issue Ahmad Hassan stated that "prompting . . . does not exist in the *Qur'ān*, is not confirmed by *Ḥadīth*, was not ever performed by the Companions, and was not mentioned as a valid ceremony by any of the four founders of the law schools."[154] He stated that all *Ḥadīth* introduced by the traditionalists in support of their position were

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[151] *Sual-Djawab*, IV, 4–5.
[152] *Ibid.*
[153] von Grunebaum, *Unity and Variety*, p. 294.
[154] *Sual-Djawab*, I, 21.

weak when examined according to the rules of the science of *Ḥadīth* and therefore should not be taken as the basis for religious practice. In a second *fatwā*, Ahmad Hassan stated clearly some principles concerning this questionable practice: "1) The *Qur'ān* clarifies that people who are dead cannot be taught anything; 2) The scholars of the collection and examination of *Ḥadīth* state that there is not a single firm Tradition from the Prophet confirming prompting; 3) One noted legalist stated that he did not ever see a person perform the prompting, except the people of Syria when an imminent person died, when a person came forward and performed the prompting; 4) There are no *Ḥadīth* that indicate that the Prophet ever performed the prompting, or that his Companions, or that the early scholars did; 5) Teaching the dead is not only refuted in Religion, but according to reason it can be seen to be the act of a madman; 6) According to the *Qur'ān*, when a person is close to death his repentance is not accepted. If this is true, then how can the teachings of the living to the dead already in the grave have validity?"[155] Ahmad Hassan also quoted *Al-Naml* 80, and *Al-Fāṭir* 22, both of which state that man cannot "create hearing among persons already in the grave," as proof that the deceased can only answer the questions posed by the angels according to the actions of his own life. The dead, he concluded, are unable to be taught or reminded of any religious teaching whatsoever, and he added an ironic suggestion that the traditionalist teachers might better teach the living about religion than waste their time in fruitlessly reminding the dead of those things.[156]

c. *Stating Intention at the Beginning of Prayer*

In the dispute over whether a statement of "intention" (*niyyah* or *niat*) often given before the start of any of the five daily prayers, the Persatuan Islam was on the side opposing its use. Moehammed Munir stated in a *fatwā* that the *Ḥadīth* was weak that was often cited by the traditionalists in support of their contention that the intention was commanded and should be recited aloud. Instead, several firm *Ḥadīth* were brought forward indicating that it was not a part of reg-

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[155] *Sual-Djawab*, II, 14.

[156] *Al-Naml*, 27:80 states: "Lo! Thou canst not make the dead to hear, nor canst thou make the deaf to hear the call when they have turned to flee." *Al-Faṭir*, 35:22 states: "Nor are the living equal with the dead. Lo! Allāh maketh whom He will to hear. Thou canst not reach those who are in the graves." *Sual-Djawab*, I, 19–20.

ular worship.[157] In another *fatwā*, Ahmad Hassan stated that the practice was condoned only by some scholars of the Shāfiʿī school, but that al-Shāfiʿī himself had not followed the practice. He attacked the argument that performing the intention aids sincerity by aligning the heart with the lips, by stating that "it is the heart that moves the lips, and not the lips that move the heart."[158] He also rejected the argument that intention was justified by analogy from the example of the Prophet's repetition of the intention in performing the pilgrimage, first on the grounds that a *Ḥadīth* reporting the Prophet's action was weak, and second, that analogy (*qiyās*), while valid in some areas of Muslim legal thinking, cannot be used to determine matters of worship, which can only be set from clear dictates of the *Qurʾān* and *Sunnah* of the Prophet. Finally, he countered the argument that it was good innovation, by reiterating that while innovation is permissible in secular matters, it can never be incorporated into matters of worship which have been determined by God's clear commands.[159]

d. *Status of Muslim Arabs in the Indonesian Community*

The Persatuan Islam, and more specifically its periodical *Islamic Defender*, was deeply involved in the polemic against traditionalist Hadrami Arabs in the early 1930's, and was in turn a favorite target of ʿAlawī polemic and retort. A series of articles bearing the general title "Belief of the ʿAlawī concerning Their Own Importance and the Dangers of Such Belief" appeared in *Islamic Defender* during 1933, and outlined the major criticisms of the modernist Muslims toward the views of that Hadrami group.[160] These articles attacked ʿAlawī adherence to "imitation," rejection of fresh interpretation, its tolerance for visitation to saints' tombs and consequent approval of saint worship, its insistence that women with pedigree extending to the Prophet not marry except to male with a similar pedigree, and its belief in the elevated status of the Arab in the Indonesian Muslim community.

The Persatuan Islam repeatedly emphasized its belief that the perpetuation of the class distinctions demanded by the ʿAlawī Group

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[157] *Sual-Djawab*, VIII, 36.

[158] *Sual-Djawab*, I, 11; cf. G.W.J. Drewes, "Indonesia: Mysticism and Activism" *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization*, edited by Gustav E. von Grunebaum (Chicago, 1955), 294.

[159] *Sual-Djawab*, I, 11–12; *Pembela Islam*, 60 (April 1933), 35–39.

[160] *Pembela Islam*, from 34 (September 1931) to 61 (May 1933).

in religion was contrary to Islamic social doctrine, which the Persatuan Islam claimed propounded equal rights for all humans. Persis writers stressed that Islam was a religion for all humankind, and that within religion there were to be no distinctions and prerogatives based on race or ancestry. Ahmad Hassan cited references from the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* and stated that the only distinction among believers was in perfecting their worship of God. He stated that it was contemptible for a person to glorify himself on the basis of his pedigree. "If a person feels exalted because of his family, then we answer that it may be considered that there is not a family existing that is not related to prophets. . . . Indeed, if a person prides himself that he is an Arab then we remind him that Jews come from the same stock,"[161] although he did not clarify his meaning. In the same vein, an unidentified writer in *Islamic Defender* charged that the Arab insistence on special prerogatives was contrary to the rule of universal equality espoused by Islam. This writer compared the ʿAlawī group's attitude with that of the Dutch in attempting to exploit the Indonesians for their own ends. "The ʿAlawīs" he stated, perhaps drawing an argument from the nationalist struggle against the Dutch, "are opponents of groups which advocate equal rights and undertake efforts to free themselves of the fetters of servitude." The writer concluded that the Arab opposition to equality was wrong and hinted that it might even be evidence of polytheism.[162] Another article in *Islamic Defender* elaborated on this charge by stating that in many cases Arabs, particularly those belonging to the ʿAlawī Group, had attempted to set themselves up as being "blessed" and to make themselves intercessors between other people and God.[163] This charge, actually more connected with the problems of mysticism and saint worship, is discussed more fully elsewhere in this study.

The Persatuan Islam rejected use of the title *sayyid*, used by many claiming descent from the Prophet Muḥammad, as having any special religious significance, and generally supported the Al-Irsyad position that *sayyid* could be used in Arabic as a general form of address, similar to "mister."[164] The ʿAlawīs believed that *sayyid* was a title

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[161] *al-Ḥujurāt*, 49:13, states: "Lo! the noblest of you in the sight of Allāh, is the best in conduct." *al-Ḥujurāt*, 49:10, states: "The believers are naught else than brothers." A *Ḥadīth* recorded by Abū Dāwūd states: "An Arab is not more noble than a non-Arab unless in conduct." *Sual-Djawab*, III, 4, 7.

[162] *Pembela Islam*, 58 (February 1933), 11.

[163] *Pembela Islam*, 59 (March 1933), 18.

[164] *Keng Po* 3074 as quoted in *Pembela Islam*, 59 (March 9, 1933), 27.

denoting "authority, responsibility and property,"[165] and indicated that the person using the title was honored among Muslims.[166] In 1932 and 1933, Shaykh Muhammad al-'Attas Ba 'Alawi, the Arab representative on the People's Council, unsuccessfully urged that body to recommend enactment of a law limiting use of the title sayyid in the Netherlands East Indies to those who already claimed the title. The *Islamic Defender* was in the forefront of the modernist Muslim press on this issue and roundly attacked al-'Attas's stand.[167] Illustrative of the *Islamic Defender's* attack was an article written in 1932 which stated that during the time of the Prophet, 'Alī, his son-in-law, and Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, his grandsons, were never addressed with the title *sayyid.* The article claimed the custom of calling the descendants of the Prophet *sayyid* was a latter day practice, but professed not to know its origin.[168]

Persis activists regarded kissing the hand of a sayyid (*taqbīl*) upon meeting him as a symbol of Arab insistence on status, not as a matter of religious command, and consequently opposed it. Ahmad Hassan reportedly was compelled by this custom to kiss the hand of an Arab official when he taught at the Assegaf School in Singapore, and later, when he was a daily writer on the *Malay Messenger, (Utusan Melayu)* he wrote an article criticizing the custom.[169] His thesis in that article was similar to that of the editors of *Islamic Defender*, who justified their opposition to such kissing on the basis that it was not practiced in the time of the Prophet. ". . . and not ever did they ask a person to kiss their hand, and not ever did people kiss their hand."[170]

Persatuan Islam writers also looked askance at the related matter of an Arab woman with pedigree marrying only someone with an equally illustrative pedigree. *Islamic Defender* was very critical of the Arab position on this matter and continually pointed out that such exclusivity on the part of the Arabs was due to an exaggerated belief in their own importance. In a lengthy *fatwā* examining the question of marriage between an Arab woman with pedigree and a non-Arab, Moenawar Munir noted that Islam did place some restrictions on marrying, but all these restrictions were to prevent marriage among

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[165] *Pembela Islam*, 50 (August 1932), 20.
[166] *Pembela Islam*, 58 (February 9, 1933), 11.
[167] *Pembela Islam*, 50 (August 1932), 10, 20–21.
[168] *Pembela Islam*, 45 (April 1932), 13.
[169] Noer, "Rise," 138.
[170] *Pembela Islam* 45 (April 1932).

close relatives. Ahmad Hassan stated emphatically that there were no references in the *Qur'ān* or *Ḥadīth* to support the ruling of several Shāfi'ī scholars on this matter. He concluded that marriage should not be based on any such policy of exclusivity that was intended to undermine the Islamic belief in the religious equality of all Muslims.[171]

Ahmad Hassan was particularly opposed to the use of title denoting religious status and refused to use the titles *haji* and *kijai*, although generally qualified to do so.[172] In a *fatwā* discussing use of the title *Hajj*, Ahmad Hassan broadened the subject to include all titles of respect, and concluded that "these expressions and names do not harm so long as whoever has the title does not become proud and haughty with the title."[173] In the next period, we shall see that there was a change of thinking on this matter by other leaders of the Persatuan Islam, who accepted the titles of *Hajj* and *Kiai*. Strikingly, during their lifetimes Ahmad Hassan and his son Abdulkadir Hassan were referred to by others as *kiai*, but they themselves did not use the K. H. (*kiai haji*) appellation before their names.

3. *Comparison*

The Persatuan Islam had a viewpoint concerning "imitation (*taqlīd*)" and "fresh interpretation" (*ijtihād*) that closely paralleled that of Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā, both of whom wanted de-emphasis of the first and greater use by scholars of the latter. Views of history were much the same regarding the development of Muslim attitudes that closed off new investigation into many matters of belief, practice and behavior. There was a common belief that the failure of Muslim scholars to conduct such new investigation had led to a stagnation of Muslim civilization and had to be changed if Muslim societies were to reclaim a position of leadership in the world, as they believed they once had. However, there was considerable difference regarding tolerance for the legal schools of Islam. Where the Persatuan Islam saw the schools a hindrance to good Islamic practice and wanted them disbanded, 'Abduh and Riḍā preferred to see them continued, but with greater popular usage among the

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[171] *Sual-Djawab*, VI, 52–65; *Pembela Islam*, 50 (August 1932), 21.
[172] *Hudjdjatul Islam*, I, 1 (August 1956), 38.
[173] *Pembela Islam*, 60 (April 4, 1933), 31.

schools, rather than high loyalty to a single school, so that they would lose their distinctiveness and move toward a single entity. The precise issues of concern regarding innovation in matters of religion differed as well, since 'Abduh and Riḍā centered much more on the practices of popular Sufism, cults of saints and some ceremonies, such as the rite preparing and transporting the cover of the Ka'abah from Egypt each year. This agenda was much different from those concerning the Persatuan Islam with its emphasis on prayer in the vernacular, the status of Arabs in Southeast Asian society and the mixture of animism with Islamic practice.[174] Consequently, it is difficult to see more than general tendencies toward the same principles.

There were some similarities with Mawdūdī as well, who regarded the jurists of Islam to have produced standards of Islam that were no longer dynamic because the books of jurisprudence were seen as the determinants of how to view the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. He believed that *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* had value in their own right and that they should be the determinants of how law should be constructed and how it should be viewed. But he believed as well that fresh interpretation was essential to keep the message of Islam, as drawn from the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*, applicable to the situation in any time and place. C. Adams indicates that South Asian traditionalists were disenchanted with Mawdūdī, in part for his approach to politics in Pakistan, but also because of his analysis of *Ḥadīth* investigation and his pointed comments about the shortcomings of the system that was held so revered by traditionalists. In particular Mawdūdī wanted new interpretation to give meaning to the *Ḥadīth* and portrayed traditionalist interpretations as time-honored respect showing little appreciation for the dynamism of history. Concerned as he was by constant competition between Islam and non-Islam in history, he found it necessary to continually use fresh interpretation in order to sharpen the Islamic effort and channel the influence of the non-Islamic effort into constructive ways suitable for the Muslim community. This is akin to the Persis viewpoint although expressed in a very different way.[175]

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[174] Adams, *Islam*, 188–193.

[175] Khurshid Ahmad and Zafar Ishaq Ansari, *Mawdudi: an introduction to his life and thought* (Leicester, 1979), 11–19; Charles J. Adams, "The Authority of the Prophetic Hadith in the Eyes of Some Modern Muslims: in *Essays on Islamic Civilization Presented to Niyazi Berkes*, edited by Donald P. Little (Leiden, 1976), 25–47.

E. *Response to Secularist Arguments*

Like the traditionalists the nationalists were a favorite target of Persis writers in the ideological magazines and several of their jibes have already been included in the last several chapters. Here, we move to a fuller discussion of the issue by outlining the thinking of three activists who did substantial writing on the issue of nationalism: Sabirin, Ahmad Hassan and Moehammad Natsir. Sabirin was a political activist in the Sarekat Islam and dealt with all sorts of political issues in newspapers and magazines of the day; his view is the earliest of the three and contains the basic thread of the Persis doctrine of rejecting the nationalists' plan for religiously-neutral politics. Moehammad Natsir was a member of the JIB, the organization for young Muslim intellectuals, which sought to enter social and political debate with well-reasoned and well-structured argumentation; his comments were harsh and uncompromising toward the nationalists. Finally, Ahmad Hassan, writing his book on *Islam and Nationalism* in 1940, contributed the last words on the subject before the shut-down of Persis facilities at the beginning of the Japanese Occupation. His arguments reflect the stance of the ideological Muslim.

1. *Basic Principles of the the Muslim Political Position: Sabirin*

Sabirin closely reflected the thinking of the major Muslim political leaders of the 1920's, most particularly Cokroaminoto and Agus Salim, concerning the role of Islam in the independence movement that centered about the Sarekat Islam. As such it is not surprising that he should outline some of that thinking in his own articles concerning the state of affairs in Indonesia. In an article in 1932 he laments the state of affairs where a foreign colonial power, which was not Islamic, had control of the country and compelled Indonesian Muslims to live under a system which did not allow for religious considerations in public policy or in the formation of laws. He asserted that this situation was one of the primary causes for the depressed state of economic, social and cultural accomplishment of the time. He claimed that Islam could be the catalyst to change this inferior, unsatisfactory condition. He stated further that if Islamic leadership were forthcoming, even if only from Indonesian officials who had positions of importance [under the Dutch] at the local and provincial level, then laws and affairs of public concern could be handled

on the basis of Islam and the Indonesian condition would immediately begin to improve.[176] In a second article he dealt directly with the nationalists, whom he saw refusing to recognize the importance of Islam in the building of an independent society and also refusing the call of Islam to themselves personally. He accused them of taking the easy way and refusing to deal with Islam because it would cause them to examine their own lives and live in conformity with a set of rules which they could not bring themselves to accept, even though they would profit from such acceptance. It was his view that without that commitment to personal Islam, the nationalist activists were not worthy of becoming national leaders and, indeed, the power of Islam would not be apparent in their work unless they made the commitment.[177] In a third article he discussed the place of Islam in the political struggle and assigned it a position midway between other trends he regarded as competing for power in the Indonesian politics of the era. Those competing trends were "chauvinistic nationalism" and "godless communist internationalism." It was his view that chauvinistic nationalism too easily lost its way and created poor conditions for the growth of a nation; it needed the control mechanism of values to overcome such a tendency, and Islam could best fulfill that need. The same was true of internationalism based on universal brotherhood, which also was lost without a value system to give it substance and direction; again Islam could assist by tempering such concepts with its God-given set of values, already tested in the course of history. So, to Sabirin, the answer to this entire problem was to use Islam to undergird the independence movement and, also, the nation-state that would result when the movement associated with Islam ultimately was successful. Islam, to him, would assure that Indonesian independence would be won, that a prosperous state would arise, and that contact would be made internationally with other Muslims throughout the world.[178] Clearly implied in his articles, however, is the sense that Indonesia itself needed its own identity and that its association with Islam would not be any identification to a higher Muslim authority elsewhere or to a larger Muslim state in which Indonesia would be a part, even though these issues are not

[176] *Pembela Islam*, 34 (September 1934), 12–15.
[177] *Pembela Islam* 58 (September 1933), 7–8.
[178] *Pembela Islam* 29 (January 1931), 4–6.

discussed per se. Any contact with other Muslims would be on the basis of general brotherhood, not political union. Sabirin comes across as a Muslim nationalist, which is what the leading Muslim nationalists of the day—Cokroaminoto and Agus Salim—were as well.[179]

2. *Response on Specific Issues: Moehammd Natsir*

Moehammad Natsir attempted to answer the specific criticisms of the nationalists on several issues. The first of these issues was concerned with the pilgrimage and specifically whether the money spent on this religious obligation was a loss to the Indonesians who spent it and to the nationalist cause against the Dutch. The second issue dealt with the idea of whether a government should function using Islamic principles or should deliberately set such principles aside for the sake of the nationalist movement.

On the first issue, Moehammad Natsir attempted to answer the charge that the pilgrimage represented a perennial loss of income to Indonesia that could not be afforded in economic and political terms, as charged by the nationalists. Natsir accused his opponents of following Western theories of mercantilism with its stress on goods and balance of payments, and claimed that a nation's economic wealth was really measured in both "visible and invisible assets." The pilgrimage, he stated, was an example of "invisible assets" and as such had tremendous value, particularly in the villages where the returned pilgrim worked diligently and without fanfare for religious goals after his return from Makkah. Natsir maintained that the colonial administration always feared the returned pilgrim, even as it feared the "spectre of pan-Islamism and the development of an Islamic spirit." He stated that the recommendations of colonial administrators dealing with this matter, such as C. Snouck Hurgronje, were evidence of this, for while continuation of the pilgrimage was recommended, other devices, such as the increase of Western education, were called for to offset the influence of those returned pilgrims. Natsir accused the nationalists of having fallen into a trap of confronting an ally, i.e., Muslims, in the independence struggle, thereby sowing disunity, and of obstructing a legitimate ceremony of Islam through an "unreasoning imitation" of Western values. Then he turned the argument back on the nationalists by referring to the education many of them

[179] *Ibid.*, 4–6.

had received abroad, and claimed that such training "devours several million rupiah every year" which had been lost to the nation in the same way that the money for the pilgrimage had. So, he charged, if one talks about loss of money to the pilgrimage, one should also consider the cost of maintaining a student in a Western country. Natsir maintained that the real exploitation in the pilgrimage was not by the Arabs, who were fellow Muslims and opposed to colonialism, but by the Dutch, who made profit out of transporting pilgrims. The answer to this problem, explained Natsir, was not to abolish the pilgrimage, but to establish a Muslim-controlled organization to administer pilgrim affairs, including transportation, so that the costs might be reduced, and also to prevent Europeans from profiting from a religious activity.[180]

On the second issue concerning the the relationship between church and state, Moehammad Natsir started from the assumption that a backward country is backward because its leadership and population is not progressive, and that merely changing the form of government or separating religious and secular functions would not guarantee progress. "What must be separated out," he argued, "are evil, sin, disobedience, disbelief, and greed that destroy the power of the community, that lower morals and ethics, that close the gate of earthly glory and the prosperity of the Hereafter."[181] In its place a relationship of the spirit of humans with God, through worship, should be established, and this would lead to a "change that is true progress." He maintained that since life on earth and existence in the Hereafter are really identical in that one leads into the other, the religious and secular should be joined together, to ensure the fulfillment of the religious obligations commanded by religion. Natsir concluded that in such a context the secularizing actions of Ataturk in Turkey and Shah Pahlevi in Iran were really a step backward for the Muslim populations of their countries.[182] This entire argument and the reference to the two secularizing rulers was intended to answer the claims of the nationalists that these two rulers were models for modern statehood in Muslim countries.

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[180] *Pembela Islam*, 26 (May 1931), 9–12; J. Vredenbregt, "The Hadjdj: Some of its Features and Functions in Indonesia," *BKITLV* 129, 301–319.

[181] Moehammad Natsir, "Agama dan Negara," in *Falsafah Perdjuangan Islam*, ed. by M. Isa Anshary (Bandung, 1949), 428.

[182] *Ibid.*, 219; Noer, "Rise," 427–432.

3. *The Full Case against the Nationalists: Ahmad Hassan*

Ahmad Hassan wrote the final word on the Persatuan Islam's thinking about the nationalists and the national struggle in 1940 with the publication of *Islam and Nationalism.* Unlike Sabirin who speaks often for an earlier age, Ahmad Hassan answers the challenge of the nationalists made over the previous fifteen years when they had taken over the lead and direction of the independence movement and compelled everyone in the movement to rethink their assumptions regarding common identity and practical politics. He regarded the new identity as particularly dangerous since it called on Muslims to set aside their religion as the primary loyalty and accept their concept of nationalism as the universal principle of cooperation among groups supporting the drive for independence. Ahmad Hassan found the concept so odious that he challenged the nationalist leaders concerning their own identification with Islam and finds them questionable leaders for the movement because of their failings in this regard. The tone of his writing reflects the bitterness of the polemic that had been undertaken by Muslims and nationalists toward one another over the fifteen year period. He sums up his dislike in a short retort, reminiscent of the pithy adages first used in the early *Islamic Defender* articles, when attack was a favorite tool of Persis activists. "Believers should mark anyone who speaks of [going to prison camp at Boven] Digul as being better than going to Makkah! Anyone who orders the moving of the direction of prayer to [the early Islamic kingdom of] Demak [in central Java]! Anyone who abuses the Prophet Muḥammad and refers to him as the old fellow of the people of . . . [desert]! Anyone who holds the law of polygamy revealed by God as wrong . . .! Watch out!"[183] Ahmad Hassan's uncompromising stand on this issue, and his refusal to drop the subject as a topic of debate at a time Muslims and nationalists were looking for a basis of unity, was viewed by many on both sides as detrimental to the struggle for national freedom.

In his argumentation Ahmad Hassan stated that it was inconceivable that Muslims would cooperate with the nationalists, since the nationalists were unwilling to allow the Muslims freedom to carry out their religious obligations to their fullest extent, i.e., in the political realm. He warned Muslims to be on guard against nationalist

[183] Hassan, *Islam,* 16–17.

leaders who asked for cooperation, but wanted it on their own terms and, hence were really insincere in their approach. Drawing on *Qur'ānic* literary allusions he warns Muslim to beware of those "who only profess the role of a Muslim when meeting believers, but who, after departing, tighten their lips out of hatred for us because we do not favor their principles of nationalism." Beware of the hypocrite, she continued, for "if they are able to succeed in the struggle, certainly they will suppress us as much as possible!" He also stated that since the nationalists actively threatened religion, it was the duty of every Muslim to enter the political arena and help defend Islam. That could best be accomplished, he maintained, by Muslim participation only in Muslim organizations, and by the unification of all Muslim movements in a united front.[184]

Ahmad Hassan, perhaps because he was not a native-born Indonesian, but for doctrinal reasons as well, regarded the international identification of Muslim brotherhood as important. He supported pan-Islamism in the sense that he believed that Muslims throughout the Islamic world had an obligation to remove foreign rule from all parts of it, and any Muslim might work for this goal in whatever country he found himself. Consequently he rejected nationalism as advanced by the Sukarno and Soetomo group for placing national goals ahead of religion and creating "artificial" national boundaries that would perpetuate divisions in the Muslim community. The organization's viewpoint was well expressed in a *Islamic Defender* editorial in 1931 which stated that "Islam does not, properly speaking, contain nationalism, or that which leads to a consideration of national importance alone . . . separated from moral law and humanity."[185] In *Islam and Nationalism*, Ahmad Hassan explained that there was no religious prohibition against loving one's country, and he generally recognized that the national state was the practical political organization for the current age. He stated, however, that it was the first duty of all Muslims to form a single community patterned after the one organized by Muḥammad. He cited several firm *Ḥadīth* that condemned a narrow partisanship[186] of a small group or tribe at the

[184] *Ibid.*, 15, 19.

[185] *Pembela Islam*, 29 (July 1931), 2–6.

[186] The word "partisanship" is used here to denote the Arabic term *'aṣabīyah* referred to in a number of *Ḥadīth*, and translated by Ahmad Hassan into Indonesian as "kebangsaan," that is, "nationalism." Hassan, *Islam*, 21–25. Similar is another

expense of the Muslim community as a whole. On this basis, Muslim political efforts were not to be limited by national boundaries, but were to be undertaken in such a way as to benefit Muslims everywhere.[187] Accordingly, Ahmad Hassan harkens to the earlier thinking of Sabirin, if for different reasons. So convinced were the members of the Persatuan Islam of the efficacy of Muslim internationalism that they held firm to it long after many other politically-active Muslim groups adopted policies less antagonistic toward the nationalists.[188] It was only in 1945 that the Persatuan Islam put aside its differences for the sake of national unity in a very perilous time, and then agreed only to a temporary truce.

Ahmad Hassan and other Persis activists were opposed to the symbols of nationalism as much as to the movement itself. They charged that the adoption of a flag and national anthem and the deference given to national heroes and dead leaders of the movement took on a meaning rivaling that of religion and actually led individuals to regard these symbols and personages so highly as to challenge the belief in God. As such it could be classified as placing something alongside God, and, to their minds, such thinking was gross disbelief. In a *fatwā* Hadji Mahmud 'Aziz stated that these symbols might soon be regarded as having very special significance, and eventually come to be regarded as serving as a mediary between God and humans, even as saints and holy men had been mistakenly regarded by Muslims in the past.[189] Following this line of thought Ahmad Hassan contended that there was a possibility that a situation similar to that existing during the pre-Islamic period could occur when the Quraysh honored idols—not to worship them,—but in order that the idols intercede with God on the worshipers' behalf. "First they build statues commemorating people, then the statues become places of respect, later they become places for paying homage, and not long after there are those who believe [the statues] to be God. When the flag was

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editorial in *Pembela Islam* which stated that "a nationalist worker is prepared to sacrifice his life, his mind, his wealth and his soul for national freedom, because of mother Indonesia" while the Muslim will make the same sacrifice "in the way of Allāh because of Allāh." "*Bangsa* [racial grouping] does not exist in the *Qur'ān*," the article concluded, "but the principle of nationalism is rejected, forbidden, and cursed by Islam." *Pembela Islam*, No. 60 (April 9, 1933), 3–4.

[187] Hassan, *Islam*, 45–46.

[188] Djaja, *Pusaka*, 162.

[189] *Sual-Djawab*, I, 35; Hassan, *Islam*, 58–61.

originally created . . . it was used in warfare as a symbol where various people or nations united. . . . Gradually the flag acquired a fervent salute, as if it was an actual person, or a very prominent person. It is not impossible that in a short time homage will be given to the flag, and, [eventually], . . . veneration, reverence, and then regarded as God Himself."[190] On the other hand, Muslims argued, the adoption of Islamic principles by the nationalist movement was not incompatible with the inclusion of members of other religions whose rights would be respected by Islam. "Like it or not," stated Ahmad Hassan, "a Muslim must always employ Islam in all places and in all things. . . . As for other groups this is not true. Their religion does not forbid them to follow any particular basis. Whoever does so, does it from personal preference, which can be changed."[191]

Finally, Ahmad Hassan differed sharply with the perception of nationalists regarding events in other nations with Muslim populations, which were often cited as examples for the Indonesian Muslims. The nationalists viewed Kemal Ataturk in Turkey and Shah Pahlevi, who had severely curtailed religion and instituted secular regimes reflecting European modes of rule as reformers who had eliminated foreign influence and introduced modernism and progress in their countries. They tended to ignore or minimize any actions of these leaders which opposed religion, and they charged that Muslims who complained of Ataturk and Pahlevi's harshness toward religious leaders and disregard for Muslim custom were unappreciative of their greatness. In his correspondence with Ahmad Hassan, Sukarno chided the Muslims for that viewpoint. "Ignorance in religious matters was what forced Ibn al-Saʿūd to tear down the transmission towers of Radio Madinah and it is ignorance that leads Muslims to misunderstand many of the measures taken by Kemal Ataturk, Reza Khan Pahlevi or Joseph Stalin."[192] Ahmad Hassan challenged this view on the basis that the limitations on Islam in those countries had not strengthened them as the nationalists claimed, but had actually weakened them by undermining the moral fibre of their societies. The inferiority of those states was shown because "brandy, adultery, gambling and other sins are widespread, even to the extent of actually being permissible," and this has caused numerous problems

[190] *Ibid.*, 44.
[191] *Ibid.*, 41, 49.
[192] Sukarno, *Dibawah*, I, 336–337.

of security. In their place Ahmad Hassan raised the examples of Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, where the governments used law based on Islamic principles to rule the population and their problems of security were much lower than those of Turkey and Iran.[193]

4. *Comparison*

The position of the Persis writers vis-à-vis nationalism was fairly close to those of ʿAbduh and Mawdūdī, and, in fact, the debate with nationalists was a distinguishing characteristic of the campaigns of both men. ʿAbduh's early writings, made with al-Afghānī, framed the debate well when he defined nationalism as dedicated to narrow interests of a group that needed some added dimension to give it greater compassion and humanity. ʿAbduh saw Islam as providing the missing ingredient. Thereafter he had a long-running difference with the nationalists, as did his disciple Rashīd Riḍā. It was the latter who made two arguments similar to those of the Persatuan Islam. In the first place Muslims, wherever they are located, should have the opportunity to work for the installation of a proper government, although in Rashīd Riḍā this is mixed in with Arab ethnic identity along with Islam, while in the case of the Persatuan Islam the call transcended the Malay community to Muslims in general. In the second place Rashīd Riḍā also termed those who followed the nationalist line too rigidly at the expense of religion were accused of being sinners and placing themselves out of the Muslim community. However, on the other side of the coin, both ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā debated the meaning of the term "partisanship" (*ʿaṣabīyyah*) fully in order to understand its context in the modern Middle East, while Ahmad Hassan simply applied the term as he defined it without much attempt to relate it to the conditions of early twentieth century Indonesia. Nonetheless there is a similarity between the Persatuan Islam and these founders of modernist Islam.

As regards Mawdūdī, again there are similarities. In the years 1937 to 1941 there was strong sentiment among Indian Muslims for the formation of a Muslim state separate from the majority Hindus, and this movement was led by the Muslim League with the standard of nationalism as expressed in the Western context. At this point in time Mawdūdī spoke out sharply about the presence of the British

[193] Hassan, *Islam*, 52–53.

in India and the heavy influence of Western values and practices they were introducing. But, with the rise of sentiment for a national Muslim state among Indian Muslims, he spoke out strongly against such a condition, seeing in it the influence of West with its nationalistic basis for political organization and urging that this tendency be resisted since it would not foster Islamic values to his way of thinking. Accordingly he carried on a newspaper campaign against the leaders of the Muslim League for their nationalistic efforts and characterized such efforts as anti-Islamic. At this juncture he founded his Jāmi'at-ī -Islāmī (Islamic Society), which was to act as a small, elite group of activists, similar in nature to the Persatuan Islam. So in both organization and in outlook Mawdudi's outlook paralleled that of the Persatuan Islam, even if the scenario was markedly different.

F. *Some Conclusions about Early Persis Thinking*

Missing in the Persatuan Islam's thought and analysis was a critique of colonialism and the Dutch way of doing things. While there is frequent mention in *Islamic Defender* of the Dutch colonial system and some implied criticism of it, there is no great discussion of it; only a stated desire to be free of it. At times it is as though the Dutch are there, but do not somehow matter, or that they exist to be circumvented. What is important is the realm of Indonesians and the interplay of Indonesian factions with their frictions, compromises and accomplishments vis-à-vis one another. It was, of course, the realm where Islam was a reality, as it was not in the Dutch world of the Indies, and Islam was what the thinking and activity of the Persatuan Islam was all about. Consequently all the problems confronting Indonesians of the time are seen from the attitude of Muslims applying the standard Sunnī teachings with a modernist approach.

The comparison with 'Abduh-Riḍā and with Mawdūdī indicates that the Persatuan Islam was not greatly different than other groups of thinkers and activists in the early twentieth century. Context led the Persis activists to contend with a different set of circumstances than elsewhere, but the assessments and the arguments had a great deal of commonality with those other thinkers. It indicates that despite the labels of extremism that were tied to them, the Persis activists were very much within the range of Muslim thinking of the day and that they reflected one brand of Muslim activism that could be found in other areas of the Islamic world as well as in Indonesia.

SECTION SUMMARY

The Persatuan Islam demonstrated a total commitment to Islam during this era and became one model on how this might be done in the Indonesian context. All efforts were given to creating that image and reality. In this the activists emulated what religious scholars had done for some time in forming small communities in countryside to live godly lives and teach Islam to others. Those communities lived meaningful, but often comparatively isolated lives. But the Persatuan Islam was an urban group and its activists did not seek isolation, but intensive interaction with others. Through publications, formal teaching and training efforts, and public debates they sought to make others aware of the importance of accepting this "totally Muslim" lifestyle that they themselves adopted and tried to perpetuate. In the place they chose to do it and in the methods they used to achieve their goals the activists were different than others who had gone before them, even though they were not essentially different from other groups elsewhere in the Islamic world who had much the same mission.

A. *Islam as Ideology*

First and foremost the members of the Persatuan Islam were ideological. They held normative positions on the political and social issues of the day, and wanted their ideas and proposed solutions to be accepted as the defining words on those subjects. Persis activists were not interested in simply formulating doctrine and policy for members of the Persatuan Islam itself. They wanted—and, indeed, expected—the doctrine and policies they proposed to be widely accepted in society and the body politic as the correct and effective way of dealing with the key issues of the time. Certainly that ideology was Islamic at its base, but the Islamic ideas that were expounded were chosen, formulated, and focused in such a fashion that they composed a highly select set of teachings, which, while certainly not substantially different from those of other modernist Sunnī groups in Indonesia, reflected a style that was insistent on both totality of the message and on the fine points of the doctrine as well. That

message was well researched and well thought through, although by no means logically or doctrinally overwhelming in its argumentation to other Muslims; consequently, Persis activists insistence on the correctness of their doctrines and policies often caused great difficulties for others who opposed them, on great and minor points. In the face of rejection, calls for moderation or even reconsideration of their thinking, Persis members usually refused and simply called for all sides to accept their interpretation of events and their approach to the subject. While such a reply was not unusual among Indonesian Muslims of the time, Persis leaders seem strongly ideological in the nature of their response; others were less adamant.

The key assumptions of the Persatuan Islam that undergirded its ideology during the eighteen years of the Dutch period can be summarized with the following points.

1. That Muslims had not been careful about the purity of their religious doctrines and practices in the course of history and had allowed questionable and objectionable innovation to contaminate the true lessons of Islam. Muslims were charged with reexamining Islamic teachings to ascertain just which lessons were correct and where there were accretions or unsubstantiated change that needed to be expunged. Further, that in establishing Islam in Southeast Asia Muslim activists had not been adamant in insisting on standard practices and teachings of Islam and had allowed "superstitions," folk-beliefs and religious concepts and behavior from earlier religions of the area to survive and flourish as part of the converted population's general mode of religious activity, making Islam syncretic, rather than purist in tone. These problems had to be addressed immediately.

2. That all Islamic teachings were to be based on the scriptures of Islam, defined by the Persatuan Islam as the *Qur'ān* and the "firm" *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad. Moreover teachings could be arrived at by a wide group of Muslims, and needed no special knowledge in the standard Muslim theological and jurisprudential literature, the so called "yellow books" taught by traditionalists scholars in their schools. In essence this was as close to a popular approach of Islam as was likely to be attained. This approach and use of sources was to allow its key scholars to challenge many older teachings that the movement regarded as out of synch with "true" Islam. The stance also put it at odds with the older, mostly rural Muslim teachers, who held that the teachings of the classical scholars were important to an understanding of Islamic doctrine and practice. There

were other groups at the time who had already accepted the scriptures as the only legitimate sources, but they had not yet approached the subject with the ideological view that members of the Persatuan Islam expressed.

3. Within Islam all believers were equal in status before God, so there could be no race, people, family or individual who could claim superiority. The only legitimate competition among Muslims was to be in achievement of piety. Consequently, claims of Arab superiority over other races, claims of descent from the prophet giving special status, or the use of titles indicating academic attainment or previous performance of the pilgrimage were not valid in the functioning of the Islamic community. Ancillary to this principle was the corollary that all languages were appropriate for carrying the Islamic message. While the original message of Islam was in Arabic, it was justifiable and even incumbent for activists to translate, explain, interpret and otherwise outline the religious message in the vernacular. To this end Indonesian and regional languages were seen as legitimate vehicles for this activity. This principle was in the spirit of egalitarianism that was common in the economically important cities and among the populations that functioned there.

4. That the principles of Islam formed a guide or template for good thought and behavior that all believers should apply in their personal behavior, family life, communal living and in all phases of life. These principles were described as "Islamic law" and were seen as important for all Muslims to adopt, and that the communal version of them should be placed in force in the general society at any time that the Muslims were successful in gaining political control. It was necessary for all Muslims to discover the essence of this law in the scriptures of Islam and to apply it fully in life. Consequently it was incumbent on the association to offer information sessions, short courses, programs of study and regular school for the increase of knowledge among the members of the Muslim community. This was regarded as a non-ending activity involving all members of the activist elite within the organization.

5. That Islam held a higher allegiance for Indonesian Muslims than did a feeling of nationalism for the country and peoples of Indonesia as a primary loyalty. The question was not one of exclusion, although it was sometimes expressed that way by Persis activists. The Persatuan Islam did recognize that Indonesia as a concept had some meaning, but that the concept only had real validity when

harnessed to the Islamic identity of the people. Consequently, Persis activists held that the Indonesian people needed only to identify with Islam, follow its lessons and work for the end of Dutch control over Muslims and all good things would follow. Religiosity and Islamic values would replace the colonial system easily and fully, while a new Muslim state in Indonesia for Indonesian Muslims would rise to assist the people and give them earthly and spiritual guidance. This could best be seen against the entire colonial system that operated across the globe, which the Persatuan Islam maintained had to be dismantled wherever Muslim areas were occupied by a colonial power. Hence Muslims could work wherever they were for such colonial dismantling, without necessary regard for working only in their own "nation." After all, what was to be established after the dismantling was an Islamic government; hence, this was a type of pan-Islamist identity, since what was to arise was a number of Islamic governments operating in various parts of the Islamic world—Indonesia, South Asia, North Africa, and Central Asia—as the colonial powers were replaced.

6. That groups that questioned the validity of Islamic teachings were to be dealt with as wrongheaded, in error and as enemies until they changed their attitudes about Islam. In this grouping were those who believed that there were other ways of arriving at Islamic doctrines than from free examination of scriptures, those who questioned the position of the Prophet in Islam, those who believed nationalism was a superior doctrine to that of Islam in politics, those who attempted to achieve special status through religious interpretation. This principle extended to those outside of Islam who challenged Islam or Muslims in any significant way, particularly Christians who spoke of Islam and its prophet in unflattering terms, or who challenged Islam as failing to provide values suitable for the dynamic life of the early twentieth century. Significantly, they were answered with a rhetoric based on Persis formulation of Islamic principles with no apparent effort to discuss such affairs in an arena of commonly developed concepts that both sides could accept. Persis activists were not interested in compromise, but in application of the principles they saw as correct.

Some of these points are clearly stated in the statutes of the association, while others were simply operative in the work of its thinkers and activists throughout the time frame. These points were somewhat rudimentary in the beginning and elaboration and full meaning

came only later. First came the germs of the ideology, then the justifications and finally the careful analysis of Islamic teachings that laid out the doctrine itself. Actually the process was done in reverse of what one might have expected, in which the viewpoint came first and the justification second. This was historical necessity. The Persatuan Islam came into existence rather late insofar as the development of modernist Islam and nationalism in Islam were concerned. The issues had already been formulated by others, primarily by the activists of the Sarekat Islam, long before the Persatuan Islam's own formation, but none of these concepts was common coinage with full acceptance by the Muslim community of Southeast Asia. Many Muslims had yet to be convinced of these concepts—some never were—and effort needed to be undertaken to bring about the reality of the concept to the community of believers itself. So, by the time the members of the Persatuan Islam came to consider these concepts, there is every indication that they had already been formulated by others and that the Persatuan Islam was simply a vehicle for accomplishing what the concepts entailed.

B. *Comparison*

Comparison of viewpoint, doctrine and activities shows the Persatuan Islam during this era to have been part of the general Sunnī world, with similarities to the modernist reform movements of the Islamic world. There were striking similarities with the Afghānī-Abduh-Ridā' exposition of Islamic modernism and, indeed the entire Indonesian modernist movement appears to have been a latter-day development of that school of thought. The Persatuan Islam shared in that heritage. Further, the Persatuan Islam came into existence at a time prior to the use of the term "fundamentalist" to describe Muslim groups who were rigorous in their thinking about religious lessons and about the necessity for all other Muslims to accept their version of their lessons. The Persatuan Islam bears some resemblance in thinking and attitude towards 'Abdul A'lā Mawdūdī (d. 1979) and his Jam'īat Islāmī in South Asia during the 1940's and with Ḥasan al-Bannā' (d. 1948) and his Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt during the same time frame. But too much should not be made of this comparison because of the nature of the men and their organizations in those other countries who faced far different political circumstances

and, hence, influences in their formation than did the Persatuan Islam. We can see certain parallel developments and some commonality of thinking with attendant outcomes, but beyond these factors it is difficult to postulate too close an identification. There is no evidence of contact between Persatuan Islam thinkers and the other two movements in the early days, although, obviously the printed word may have made some documents available that were of interest or influence, but we have no real indication that such cross-fertilization really occurred.

C. *Persatuan Islam Strengths*

Perhaps the most important Persis contribution to the development of Indonesian Islam was its description of the fundamentals of religion. Persis writers defined Sunnī Muslim beliefs that they regarded as basic. They avoided controversy on matters of belief that have long been issues of debate among Muslims, such as God's eternal existence, and determinism, and noted that humans were not to spend their time idly speculating on matters beyond their ability to understand. The reduction of Sunnī Muslim doctrine to simple, readily understandable forms set a mark for other religious educators in Indonesia and redounds to Persis's credit, while the Persis ability to express those beliefs in a context meaningful with the contemporary world was equally laudable. This exposition of Sunnī doctrine led directly to the publication of textbooks easily understood by students and interested lay Muslims. *Learning about Prayer, The Unity of God,* and *The Scales* [commentary on the *Qur'an*] among others, constituted an important contribution to the Indonesian Muslim community since they presented an exposition of Muslim beliefs and practices written in Bahasa Indonesia, and included the appropriate religious texts in Arabic with an Indonesian translation. Such texts marked an obvious advance over the Arabic texts in use in Indonesian religious schools at the turn of the century. These books were well received when first published, have retained their popularity as religious texts to the present, and compare very favorably with more ambitious texts written in recent years.

With its exposition of indispensable Sunnī doctrine, the Persatuan Islam presented cogent arguments for modern fundamentalist Muslim principles and for the reforms which such principles would entail.

While the principles of modern Muslim fundamentalism were not original to Indonesia—having originated with the Salafiyah movements of the Middle East—the Persis presentation was valuable since it placed both principles and reform in an Indonesian context. The introduction of modernist principles was made easier by the changes in the character of Indonesian Islamic life after the beginning of the twentieth century. While the older syncretic patterns were still dominant, a minority of Muslims adhering to purist Muslim patterns existed, and modernist Muslim principles assisted many from this group to make explicit their religious ideals. On the one hand, modernist Islam allowed reinterpretation of religion in order to bring it into harmony with contemporary conditions, and on the other hand, it urged the removal of syncretism from Indonesian Muslim practices, which the purist group favored and which traditionalist Muslims were reluctant to undertake. As it happened, modernist Islamic thought also made a considerable contribution to the development of the Indonesian nationalist society in general by organizing modernists in various committees, clubs and other mass organizations for the promotion of politics, social activity, religious study, social welfare purposes and educational activity, which in turn have given identification to the larger society.

D. *Persatuan Islam Weaknesses*

On the negative side, the adoption of modernist principles led to a greater cleavage between the purist and nominal segments of Indonesian Muslim society than existed earlier. Muslim traditionalists had always helped minimize this split in the population by their considerable contact with the nominal Muslim population and tolerance of their social systems which reflected a mixture of Islamic and non-Islamic beliefs and practices. After all, they lived mostly in rural areas adjacent to one another and were somewhat interdependent. Modernist Muslims were, for the most part, products of an urban environment and had limited contact with the nominal Muslim population, so opposing practices they did not deem entirely Islamic in a people they had little contact with, was not much of a problem in community relations. This hostility and drawing apart, which modernist Muslims intensified, perpetuated a dichotomy marking Indonesian society that was perhaps most evident in Indonesian political life during the eras

under discussion. The Persatuan Islam was representative of the modernist outlook and was openly opposed to the perpetuation of much of nominal Muslim practice, and repeatedly said so.

The "true believer" mentality of Persis activists often produced narrow mindedness and intolerance. They felt they had a lock on the truth and that after they had decided an issue, whether through normal reasoning or through issuance of *fatāwā*, that the matter was closed, and that the only matter left was to tell other people what to believe. They seldom revisited their logic or their reasoning in light of the views of others or the problems of others. They were one-dimensional and, when confronted with opposition, they merely repeated the belief or undertook to attack the other side for imperfect belief, imperfect argumentation, or failing to live up to good Islamic expectations. Interaction with others was never for the purpose of coming to a common understanding, but to expose the imperfections or wrongly held view of others. These tactics alienated a lot of other groups—traditionalists, Christians, nationalists, practitioners of folk Islam, and others who were attacked. Not even fellow modernists were spared their critique.

The next shortcoming relates to the previous case. If the Sarekat Islam's effort in the first quarter of the century was too inclusive of political thought to be effective in defining an effective Islamic movement, the Persis effort in the second quarter was the exact opposite. It was too demanding and exclusive to be effective. At a time when unity of purpose was called for in the all-important drive for political independence, Persis efforts at creating the new, enlightened Muslim were undertaken in such a way as to deepen alienation among groups rather than bringing groups together. Political philosophers of a later era, such as Frantz Fanon and Herbert Marceuse, were convinced that perceptions between groups that have inferior-superior relationships could be significantly changed through confrontation and violence. The Persatuan Islam eschewed violence, but it used confrontation to promote its image, and in this it succeeded. One might question the cost of the effort, however, since it perpetuated differences at a time when peace and cooperation was needed much more.

The final shortcoming relates to leadership. The Persatuan Islam did not, despite its very meaningful efforts, produce leadership for the Islamic community of Indonesia. Certainly, later one of its younger members achieved a high degree of success, but in the era under discussion and in the following Japanese and Republican periods

Persis leaders were not in evidence as leaders of either the independence movement or of the Islamic movement itself. Several of the activists became associated with Islamic efforts, as Sabirin was with the Sarekat Islam and as Ahmad Hassan finally did as Persis representative to the MIAI grouping. A telling sign for leadership would have been found in efforts at bringing groups together for common purposes, whether they were to unite efforts for religious rites and observances or for political efforts. Persis activists never moved beyond local efforts in this field, and it was left to the Nahdlatul Ulama mostly to promote those efforts. This was a telling failure on the part of Persis activists.

E. *Concluding Remarks*

So as the era ended the Persatuan Islam was still a relatively small organization, but its reputation was considerable. Unfortunately it was a mixed reputation. In the following eras new challenges gave it new opportunities for its mission of promoting an all-encompassing Muslim identity.

PART THREE

THE PERSATUAN ISLAM IN THE ERA OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY (1948–1957)

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INTRODUCTION

When the Japanese invaded the Netherlands Indies in early 1942 the Dutch colonial system, which had endured for 350 years, was swept away. Less than four years later the defeat of the Japanese by the Allied forces allowed the Indonesian political elite to declare independence and stave off re-institution of the colonial order. In its place an independent Indonesia emerged, not without a struggle against the Dutch, but inevitably, so that on January 1, 1950 a formal transfer of sovereignty occurred. Consequently, with this basic change in the political environment, the second era of Persatuan Islam existence was markedly different than it had been in the late colonial era. The goal of achieving independence, to which Indonesians, Muslims, and members of the Persatuan Islam subscribed throughout the late colonial era, now accomplished, gave way to new problems competing for popular attention. The changed political environment caused Muslim groups to see events differently and the Persatuan Islam was no exception.

A. *Organizational and Generational Change*

At rebirth in 1948 the Persatuan Islam emerged in a different form than it had been in 1942 when it was disbanded. Earlier it had been a coalition of activists; now it became a formal organization with more attention given to process and hierarchy The Japanese occupation and the Republican era were times of mobilization of people into movements with a considerable amount of energy given to organization and guidelines of operation; it was not unusual then that the Persatuan Islam should reflect this new emphasis, regardless of how it had functioned earlier. But the change may have been effected as much by a generational shift that occurred as older members passed on and younger people took their places.

Equally important was the division of leaders in two cities—at Bandung and Bangil. The unity at Bandung in the earlier era had allowed all activities to be located in one center. Now the publishing and intellectual center was located at Bangil, while the organizational and political headquarters was found at Bandung. Apparently

the leadership at Bandung was interested in exerting some degree of centralization over new branches, particularly in educational activity. However, such centralization did not include the Bangil operations in the new arrangements. Bangil belonged, but was autonomous in all cases and even independent in some. It is a testament of the strength of Ahmad Hassan that he was always independent and his operation at Bangil, after choosing the site in the late 1930's, reflected that attitude. That particular relationship endures, even at the end of the twentieth century.

B. *Defining and Doing*

It was noted in Part I that much of the Persatuan Islam's effort centered on defining issues and providing suitable answers in the first period of its activity. While this approach continued to some degree in newly independent Indonesia, it is not nearly as pronounced or as intensive. Rather, what appears is an effort to convince others of the validity of the Persis viewpoint, which had already been made. In the area of *fatwā* making, its activists had made their mark and the reputation of the Persatuan Islam in this field was to grow in the new era. In politics its definitions were not always accepted and often challenged by others, but Persis activists were insistent on their version of political action to the very end of the era. Persis activists, generally, were to have considerable difficulty in getting others to accept their entire message, even though the basic or underlying message of Islamic behavior and belief was readily accepted by large groups of Muslims as the legitimate message of God. On the other side of the coin, the manner in which the message was delivered by Persis activists, particularly in the political arena, was called into question by many Muslims as too strident, as it had been in the earlier colonial period. Perhaps that is the mark of the ideologue.

C. *Concerning the discussion in the chapters composing Part III*

The coverage of this era proceeds in the same manner as in Part II. The historical context will be given first so that the political and social environment is given explanation and clarity. This is followed by a chapter on Persis organization in the era elaborated so that it has close relevance to the foregoing discussion on context. Finally

the third chapter delves into the thinking and argumentation of the Persatuan Islam's key writers on topics of concern to them. In particular the Persis response to modernity is covered in an attempt to show the position of the organization in relationship to many of the developments of the twentieth century concerning social dynamics and technological advancement.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONTEXT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PERIOD

A. *Prelude—The Revolution (1945–1949)*

The Japanese surrender to the Allies in August 1945, with the Japanese still in control of all of Indonesian territory, created an anomaly. The Japanese forces and administrators in Indonesia were asked to keep peace and order until the Allies could send in forces to take their place, when the Dutch administration would also return. The delay gave the Indonesian nationalist groups an opportunity to declare independence and prepare themselves to resist the occupation of the country by any foreign troops or colonial administration. Independence was declared by Sukarno and Hatta on August 17, 1945. Then began the task of convincing the Dutch and the international community that the Dutch could not be allowed to reestablish a colony in the Indonesian archipelago, a process that took over four years to realize. In fact, the Dutch did not initially recognize the new Republic of Indonesia and reestablished their own presence at Jakarta, now renamed Batavia, but were unable over the next few years to decisively defeat Indonesian forces. The Indonesian armed forces used small unit action and guerrilla strategy to counter Dutch military strength, and the new Indonesian government was able to convince the international community that the colonial era was at an end in the Indonesian region. Ultimately, at the very end of 1949, the Dutch agreed to the transfer of sovereignty. The period when this struggle took place, from 1945 through 1949, is called the "Revolution" in Indonesian history.[1]

Political control during the Revolution was divided among a large number of entities. The Dutch, who returned in late 1945, brought in well-armed military units over the next two years, totaling 150,000 men, and undertook to regain control by military action and convincing regional population groupings that it was in their interest to

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[1] See Kahin, *Nationalism*; Benedict O'G Anderson, *Java in the Time of Revolution* (Ithaca and London, 1978); Wolf, *Indonesian*; Reid, *Indonesian*; Pluvier, *South-East*; Abdul Haris Nasution, *Sekitar Perang Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Bandung, 1984).

side with the Dutch rather than with the Republic of Indonesia. Military action was moderately successful in the short run as objectives were often met, but the Dutch army did not have enough troops to militarily control the entire country, so they had to make choices as to which areas they would occupy. Consequently, they concentrated on West Java, the Deli region in Northeast Sumatra and several other locales. Politically they were very successful in establishing an administration at Batavia under a governor-general which operated its agencies in territory that the Dutch controlled militarily. The Dutch were also relatively successful after 1947, again in the short run, in establishing regional Indonesian states with Dutch regents working closely with the Indonesian officials and preserving Dutch economic interests. These new regional states, in West Java, on Sumatra and in the eastern islands, took advantage of regional sentiment for political autonomy, and were drawn close to the Dutch for economic reasons in an era when shortages of all goods was pandemic. With these new states under its implicit control, the Dutch believed that the Republic of Indonesia would be limited in territory and influence and would eventually become one of the constituent states of a federal Indonesia controlled politically and economically by the Dutch. These political efforts were reasonably successful in the short run, but could not be sustained in the long run because of the strong sympathy in the regional states for the cause of Indonesian independence which the Republic of Indonesia symbolized. When the Dutch attempted to end the dispute with the Republic of Indonesia by military action, they were successful in capturing nearly the entire leadership of the Republic, but sympathy for the Republic, both in the regional states and in the international community, forced the Dutch to back down, release the leaders, and negotiate an end to formal Dutch colonial control in most of the archipelago.[2]

On the other side of the political divide the Republic of Indonesia gained and held political control in large areas of central and east Java, in Minanagkabau on Sumatra and other spots throughout the archipelago. The strategy, as already stated, was to fight both conventional and guerrilla warfare against the Dutch, while negotiating with the Dutch for recognition and also bringing international pressure to bear on the Dutch to accede to Indonesian demands. In this

[2] Wolf, *Indonesian*, 39–67; David Wehl, *Birth of Indonesia* (London, 1948), 170–174; Pluvier, *South-East*, 427–430.

the Republic was not overly successful in the short term, often losing militarily because of Dutch superiority in weapons and training, but managing to avoid outright defeat. At the conference table the Republic was able to convince Dutch allies that they were not a remnant of a Japanese-sponsored political system, but an actual independence movement seeking the end of colonial control. In a new political era dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union, where both powers regarded the breakup of colonial empires as preferable, the Indonesian cause seemed logical and desirable. Inevitably international opinion moved to the side of the Republic Over the four years of the Revolution the Republic of Indonesia developed a governmental system that generally met the requirements for a functioning nation-state, even though administrative expertise was in short supply and shortages in the general economy allowed the government to function only at a minimum efficiency. In 1950, with the onset of fully-recognized independence, Indonesia was a poor country by international standards, but it had reasonable prospects of success given the raw materials that it contained.[3]

During the Revolution a system of government evolved in the Republic of Indonesia that was parliamentary in both form and in its operation. The parliament was appointed, with fairly wide representation of political, ethnic and regional groupings. An election to replace this temporary arrangement was planned for the first years of total independence; actually it only occurred in 1955. Meanwhile the temporary parliament formed cabinets to run the affairs of state, with a prime minister, who worked with a president who had some executive powers of his own. In the temporary parliament the members broke down ideologically between the left and the center-right with the center-right coalition forming the cabinets. The two leading parties dominating cabinets at this time were the Partai Nasional Indonesia-PNI (Indonesian National Party) and Masjumi, representing respectively, the nationalist and Muslim political groupings, which were the two largest parties in the legislature and also in the larger society. That coalition was not a particularly strong or harmonious one, and in practice there was difficulty in formulating policy, particularly in negotiating with the Dutch. Failure to survive a vote of

[3] Allen M. Sievers, *The Mystical World of Indonesia* (Baltimore, 1974), 211–226; Leslie Palmier, *Indonesia* (New York, 1965), 140–14.

confidence in the temporary parliament was common and resultant changes of government were necessary. Aside from the nationalists and Muslims, however, there were many other contenders for power, particularly from the far left, where the communists worked to establish a united front with other parties. Communist impatience, as marked by an attempted *coup d'état* in 1946 and by a general uprising in 1948, made their position untenable and they were then excluded from participation for the remainder of the period, although they would reappear in the following era with renewed vigor. Further complicating the national scene, political parties themselves were subject to a great deal of factional bickering, which increased the difficulty of creating leadership in the parties, so at best most parties were weakly organized with leaders often only temporarily holding their position, and very few of them had good control over their cadres. This interaction of political elements in a parliament, however, was popular, and allowed an open kind of politics to develop that was to serve the republic well in the following era, when egalitarian principles and democracy were highly regarded for a considerable time.[4]

In general the Revolution was a time of hardship in all areas of Indonesia, since the economy was only slowly recovering from the Japanese period when it had been badly eroded to support the Japanese war effort, and the unsettled conditions meant that foreign capital was slow to reinvest in the country. The areas under Dutch control were better off since the Dutch did provide some assurances for new capital, and they also had access to consumer goods that were in very short supply everywhere else in Indonesia. Large-scale aid from abroad was generally not available to the Republic of Indonesia, and it was not until the following era that this situation changed.

Muslim activity during this era was concentrated on political matters and the overriding goal of Indonesian independence, a goal generally desired by all Indonesian Muslims whether they were located in Dutch or Republican territory. Early in the era Muslim leaders formed a political party reflecting Islamic interests, even though they were already committed to working with other groups for achieving independence. Consequently, in September 1945, a group of prominent Muslim leaders, led by Abdulkahar Muzakkir, Wahid Hasjim and Moehammad Roem, met to reactivate Masjoemi, established

[4] Donald Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia 1951–1963* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966), 21; Wolf, *Indonesian*, 56; Pluvier, *South-East Asia*, 375–378.

originally by the Japanese as a Muslim unity organization, which had never been disbanded, but had become dormant. These leaders organized a conference of Muslim notables later that month when it was decided to create an entirely new organization called Masjumi, with, theoretically, no connection with the old Masjoemi founded under the Japanese. Nevertheless, the adoption of the same name—with a new spelling to correspond with Bahasa Indonesia orthography rather than Dutch—allowed it to incorporate the old Masjoemi's organization into its new association[5] Masjumi immediately adopted a policy of cooperation with the nationalists then running the Republic of Indonesia government, and, as stated above, nearly all the governments until 1957 were coalitions of those two political forces.[6]

Also during this era the Muslim mass organizations began to function again, and by 1948 the schools these organizations operated were again in session and other social, welfare, and religious activities began to take place as well. The Muhammadiyah and the Nahdlatul Ulama, the two paramount mass Muslim organizations in the previous periods, continued their dominance of the Muslim community, with the former still representing the modernist trend and the latter carrying the banner of traditionalist Islam. Both of these organizations supported the Republic fully and both became organizational members of Masjumi, giving substance to the desired Muslim front in politics. The members of the Jong Islamieten Bond (Young Muslims' League), a modernist movement discussed earlier, assumed positions of importance in Masjumi and dominated the administration. However, feelings between modernists and traditionalists remained strained. Consequently the two Muslim groups remained totally committed in their support for an independent Indonesia, but were competitors in the political arena.[7]

During this period a challenge came to the Republic through the form of the Darul Islam (Islamic State Movement) movement, representing a strain of Muslim thought that had developed in Islamic councils during the late Dutch period, which called for the immediate declaration of an Islamic state and the imposition of sacred law (*sharīʿah*) throughout the territory of the state. One proponent of

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[5] Noer, *Partai*, 44–45; Kahin, *Nationalism*, 156–158; Anderson, *Java*, 219–224.
[6] Atjeh, *Sedjarah*, 349–350; Noer, *Partai*, 45–69.
[7] *Ibid.*

this outlook, named Kartosuwirjo, gained control of a paramilitary unit trained by the Japanese as a defense force and became part of the republican forces in the mountainous West Java area. In March 1948, he declared the area of West Java that his forces occupied to be a provisional Islamic state with himself as head of state. On August 7, 1949, he issued a proclamation establishing the (Islamic State of Indonesia). The proclamation declared that the aim of the new state was to establish its power "one hundred percent *de facto* and *de jure* in all of Indonesia," and that the laws of Islam would be operative within all the territory held by this state. Its followers then began to raid villages in the West Java area forcing them to pay "taxes," meet the requirements for manpower laid on them, and attempted to impose Kartosuwirjo's version of Islamic law on them.[8]

Eventually the republican government decided that the terrorist activities, the announced goals, and the refusal to recognize the republican government constituted rebellion and declared the Darul Islam movement to be an illegal organization. A parliamentary investigation in 1948, led by Moehammad Natsir, was less severe in its judgments and recommended that the government differentiate between renegade groups conducting terror in the countryside and the true Darul Islam with its concept of an Islamic state. Natsir's recommendation reflected the viewpoint of many Muslim groups within the Republic, in that they did not support Kartosuwirjo and disapproved of his approach to the problem of an Islamic state, but were reluctant to either condemn him or have the government take decisive action against his movement because of its purported Muslim goals. Many Muslims feared that to condemn the Darul Islam was really a move against the principle of an Islamic state and believed that persuasion could ultimately bring Kartosuwirjo into the republican fold. The isolated region and the need for republican forces elsewhere to counter the Dutch military made it infeasible to do anything about the Darul Islam for the remainder of the era. It was to return to prominence in another guise during the next era.[9]

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[8] Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, *The Republican Revolt: A Study of the Acehnese Rebellion* (Singapore, 1985), 197–253; Karl Jackson, *Traditional Authority, Islam and Rebellion* (Berkeley, 1980), 11–20.

[9] Van Nieuwenhuijze, *Aspects*, pp. 173–174.

B. *The Liberal Democracy Era (1950–1959)*

1. *The Dynamics of Government and Society*

a. *Passages to Independence*

When sovereignty passed to the United States of Indonesia on January 1, 1950 a real Indonesian nation hardly existed. Sixteen states made up the federal union consisting of the Republic of Indonesia and fifteen other states from areas where military control allowed Dutch officials to structure political entities they believed would protect Dutch economic interest and allow Dutch political influence in the future. Overseeing the entire political arrangement was a Netherlands-Indonesian Union, headed by the Queen, which was to be an annual consultative arrangement to discuss issues between the two countries. That arrangement lasted until early 1956 when the Indonesian side withdrew over a number of issues, including the status of West New Guinea which had not been transferred to Indonesia with the other territories in the archipelago under Dutch control. The United States of Indonesia was located at Jakarta, the former Batavia, and was headed by a president—the first and only one was Sukarno, who had been president of the Republic of Indonesia,—there was a two-house legislature to deal with law and policy making, and there was a cabinet which operated the government with ministers in charge of the administration, typical in most parliamentary governments. The first and only prime minister was Moehammad Hatta, the vice president of the Republic of Indonesia, and the first and only cabinet drew heavily from the Republic of Indonesia for eleven of the sixteen ministers. This cabinet lasted only until August 1950, about eight months, but during that time the political environment was changed by the incorporation of all the constituent states into the Republic of Indonesia, most of them as a result of grass-roots action within their populations. Others were persuaded through consultations to set aside their autonomy and join the republic. The Hatta government then drafted a provisional constitution for the Republic of Indonesia to be used until a constituent assembly could be elected and draw up a permanent one. The United States of Indonesia became a moot operation and was not used thereafter, although it continued to exist in theory.[10]

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[10] See R. Supomo, *The Provisional Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia*, trans. by

In the new political arrangement under the provisional constitution of the Republic there was a president and a vice president. Sukarno was the only president during the period under discussion and Hatta was vice president until 1956, when he resigned; the position was vacant thereafter. There was a single house in the legislature, with appointed representation pending elections, which did not occur until 1955 and were not repeated until the end of the system in 1959. Membership in parliament—in the early period members were appointed and during the later period members were elected—came from a wide diversity of political interests and parties and, consequently, cabinets had to be formed on the basis of political coalitions since no one party had a majority. All prime ministers were from either the Masjumi or the Partai National Indonesia (Indonesian Nationalist Party—PNI) and nearly all cabinets were coalitions containing members of both of these major parties. Parties were short-lived, usually a year or less; there was a total of six throughout the era of slightly over seven years.[11] Cabinets were cobbled together by formateurs appointed by the president, but thereafter responsible to the parliament. Obviously, as we shall observe below, there was considerable parliamentary maneuvering, which resulted in overturning and replacing governments.

b. *Problems of Nation Building*

In 1950 the nation-state of Indonesia barely existed. While the Dutch had managed to centralize much of its administration in the late colonial area, there had never been any attempt to bring the populations into any sort of common polity. As we have seen earlier, there was a nationalist movement that did attempt to spread some commonality, at first with the idea of underlying Muslim identity and later with an Indonesian national identity, but this had affected only part of the population, mostly those in urban areas and primarily

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Garth N. Jones. (Ithaca, 1961), 10, 78–81; Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (Ithaca, 1962), 58–71 Noer, *Partai*, 199–201.

[11] After the Hatta cabinet (December 1949 to August 1950), there were cabinets headed by Moehammad Natsir (Masjumi, September 1950 to March 1951); Sukiman Wirjosandjojo (Masjumi, April 1951 to February 1952); Wilopo (Nationalist, April 1952 to June 1953); Ali Sastroamidjojo (Nationalist, July 1953 to July 1955); Burhanuddin Harahap (Masjumi, August 1955 to March 1956) and Ali Sastroamidjojo (Nationalist, March 1956 to March 1957); Djuanda (Non-party, April 1957 to June 1959). See Susan Finch and Daniel Lev, *Republic of Indonesia Cabinets 1945–1965* (Ithaca, 1965).

on Java and in West Sumatra. Ethnic groups continued to see themselves as the major point of identification. The major groupings were the Javanese and Sundanese on Java, the Minangkabauis, Achenese, and coastal Malays on Sumatra, the Dayaks on Kalimantan, and the Balinese, Buginese and Makarese to the East, as well as the three foreign communities located in various localities of the country—the Chinese, the Arabs and the Indians.[12] Notwithstanding the unification movement of 1950 when the constituent states of the United States of Indonesia were consolidated into the Republic of Indonesia, there were strong pulls throughout the era for local autonomy, for significant roles for local politicians, for recognition of economic rights to goods produced locally, and for preservation of ethnic and regional ways of doing things. The Dutch in their time had been fairly cognizant of these parochial interests because it suited their style of rule, but the new Indonesian state, seeking to create a new entity, found particularism a hindrance to the establishment of their conception of how this state should be formed and operated. The centrifugal forces of regionalism took expression in three ways. First, with the absorption of all the states into the Republic the administrators, police and army units had necessarily to be integrated as well. The result was that not all the personnel were needed, which created resentment when part of them were released from service. In addition, those that remained in service had to be organized in different ways to conform with the Republic's way of doing things. This created friction when new superiors were set in place over regional units. Second, the export permits, licenses and fees for the importing and exporting of goods passed from regional hands over to the Jakarta administration, depriving local governments of the income of these devices, in exchange for annual budgets of operation which were paltry in comparison to what was lost. Third, the Republic was a centralized republic with little room in its administrative system for local interpretation, so decisions were made in Jakarta on routine matters of administration previously made in the regions. Most regions and ethnic groups saw the new system as Java-centered and Java-dominated,

[12] Kennedy sets the number of native ethnic and racial divisions at 56 and gives the following figures for the eight most populous groups in 1940: Javanese, 27 million; Sundanese, 8.5 million; Acehnese, 8 million; Madurese, 4.5 million; Coastal Malays, 3.5 million; Minangkabau, 2 million; Balinese, 1.2 million; and the Batak, 1 million. Raymond Kennedy, *The Ageless Indies* (New York, 1942), 23–26.

despite the significant numbers of non-Javanese in the government itself. As the period progressed resentment on these issues grew and was one major cause of dissatisfaction that brought the parliamentary system to an end.[13]

In addition to ethnic and regional identification, the country had other divisions as well. First was the rural-urban divide, with the majority of people living in agricultural villages, most with no or minimal education, with poor communication and transportation facilities at their disposal, and only limited access to modern health facilities. Local custom and leaders dominated this rural society, and the essence of the new political order was slow to penetrate the strong, ingrained culture operating there. In the urban areas access to education, health facilities, communication and transportation were better than in the villages, although hardly ideal in any case. However, this society was much more open to contemporary political ideas and took part in political development either actively or passively. Second, wealth and access to power was also a point of division. The new political arrangements meant that there were enhanced economic opportunities for some groups in society. Here it was the Chinese and Arab groups that profited handsomely because of their previous experience as middlemen in the colonial system, along with a group of native-born Indonesians who had access to government contracts, rights to found banks and credit establishments, and import-export licenses. This created a new "haves—have nots" dichotomy in society that naturally resulted in tension between those who "had" and those that "wanted." The highly visible role of the Chinese in the new economic order, along with previous resentment of their business acumen, eventually became a point of disruption late in the era, although at that time the Chinese seem to have been scapegoats for the failure of the system, not the cause of it.[14]

During this early period of Indonesian nationhood, in the aftermath of a severe struggle to become independent, things did not go well on any front, politically, economically or socially. There is no reason that the country should have done well, considering the effort that was needed to transform Indonesia from a colony to an independent country, to reconstruct what had been lost as a result of

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[13] Feith, *Decline*, 26–32; Noer, *Partai*, 271–304.

[14] Feith, *Decline*, 481–487; Kuntowijoyo, *Demokrasi dan Budaya Birokrasi* (Yogyakarta, 1994), 107–111.

Japanese war policy and the war against the Dutch, and to modernize a society that was still very rural and limited in its industrial capacity. Still there were some accomplishments. One can point to the building of a governmental infrastructure, the initial efforts involved in creating a national economy, the foundation of a national university system, the first efforts at integrating the myriad fighting units into national defense forces, and a long public debate on the philosophical underpinnings of the Indonesian state.[15] While many of things only came to fruition in the following eras—some in the Guided Democracy Period (1957 to 1966) and others during the New Order Period (1966–1998)—this era was a genesis in nation-building. Unfortunately the Liberal Democracy period ended badly, with a large-scale revolt by regionalist forces, an economy that was in shambles, and a clear loss of confidence in the parliamentary system as a means of operating a government.

The first major problem confronting the new government was the integration of various military units, paramilitary forces and regional militias into a national defense force. Large numbers of these units were demobilized since they were no longer needed after the Dutch transferred sovereignty; some were given land in sparsely settled areas of the Outer Islands, particularly Sumatra and Sulawesi. After demobilizing nearly 80,000 troops, Indonesia was left with an army of about 200,000, which was considered larger than needed, but was eventually maintained.[16] Reorganization provided a system of regional commands, centralized training for new officers at a military school in Malang, and, eventually, attempts to transfer commanders periodically so that they did not gain undue influence or identification with particular jobs or regions. The first two efforts proved successful over the long run, but the policy of rotating senior commanders was resisted throughout the era, particularly by those assigned to commands in the areas of their own ethnic origins. By 1956 and 1957 many of these area commanders had established themselves as virtual rulers over their regions, and a few entered the economic sector where they made arrangements with foreign firms taking raw materials from their areas. In some cases these arrangements included direct payment to them in order to prevent payment to offices in

[15] Herbert Feith, "Toward Elections in Indonesia," *Pacific Affairs* XXVII, 3 (September, 1954), 236–254.
[16] Feith, *Decline*, 79–80.

Jakarta, which returned very little of it to Outer Island regions, using it instead to handle the problems of resources-poor Java.[17] At the national level the army moved to challenge the political leadership represented by cabinet governments several times during the era, in part because of inadequate resources allocated to the armed forces, attempts by the governments to dictate army operational matters, and by not addressing other national problems to the satisfaction of army leaders. By 1956 the situation had deteriorated to the point where army leadership under General Nasution barely acknowledged the authority of the cabinet, and, instead, gave allegiance to President Sukarno. That support was instrumental in allowing President Sukarno to assume emergency powers and, later, to declare the parliamentary period at an end and institute a new system known as Guided Democracy.[18]

The second problem centered on the economic weaknesses of the country, which has been alluded to above, where the production of raw materials, largely through the plantation system, provided most of Indonesia's foreign reserves. To begin with, the Indonesian government budgets ran a deficit of 15 to 25% per year throughout the era, with no attempt to bring income and expenditures into balance, except by printing new money. This created an inflationary spiral and the rupiah consequently sold on the black market for up to 300% of its legal rate.[19] In addition, while rice production was somewhat higher than it had been during the Dutch era, it was not sufficient to meet consumption, largely because of the rise in population and also a switch to more prestigious foods, such as rice rather than beans. By 1956, 763 thousand tons of rice were imported, representing 13% of the imports of the Republic.[20] Next, nearly 72% of the population lived from the production of agricultural products—rubber, tobacco, palm oil, copra, tea, coffee, quinine, spices, forest products and cattle—in either plantation or small-holder agriculture. While this was a mainstay of the economy, rubber in particular

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[17] *Ibid.*, 493–500.

[18] *Ibid.*, 589.

[19] J.A.C. Mackie, "The Indonesian Economy, 1950–1963," in *The Economy of Indonesia: Selected Readings*, ed. by Bruce Glassburner. (Ithaca and London, 1971), 33; Roger A. Freeman, *Socialism and Private Enterprise in Equatorial Asia: The Case of Malaysia and Indonesia* (Stanford, 1968), 87.

[20] Tojib Hadiwidjojo, "New Trends in Agricultural Development Programs in Indonesia," in *Indonesia: Resources and Their Technological Development*, ed. by Howard W. Beers. (Lexington, 1970), 19.

began to suffer as trees passed their peak years and could not be immediately recovered because new planting had not been done since the 1930's. Associated with these conditions, there were also problems of investment, where foreign firms had difficulty getting contracts for new ventures in the plantation sector, but more importantly in the petrochemical and mining areas. New nationalistic legislation put severe limits on foreign investment lest it should become a new form of imperialism. In general, foreign firms, particularly those operated by the Dutch, had many restrictions placed on them, often because of nationalism. In addition to limits on new investment, firms already operating had to constantly replace foreign workers and managers with Indonesian personnel, with attendant problems of production lags as new personnel learned their jobs. Some national firms were operated by former army officers, who also had to learn their jobs.

International assistance was limited. Indonesia resisted becoming a member of a regional political bloc in the early stages of the Cold War, when the United States and its allies on one side and the Soviet Union, China and their allies on the other were courting countries that had just become independent. Choosing a side might have been salutary for Indonesia, especially in increasing aid and investment, particularly if the Western bloc had been chosen; nevertheless, its leaders chose not to be affiliated with either side. Certainly, some assistance was obtained through regional associations, such as the Colombo Plan and the United Nations-sponsored Economic Council for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE). It also received some aid from a number of European nations and from the United States. The United States was particularly active in the agricultural field and in medical education.[21] These efforts were far short of what the country really needed to undergo adequate economic reconstruction.

Education was a bright spot, although it probably did not appear to be so at the time. From 1950 to 1959 elementary education in the public schools was given attention with an increase of pupils rising from 4.9 million to 8.3 million and elementary teachers rising from 86.000 to 206,000. Overall the adult literacy rate during this period rose from 10% to 58%. The number of technical high schools increased from 126 to 505 and in the higher education sector 14 state

[21] Palmier, *Indonesia*, 144–147.

universities, 55 state colleges and 112 private institutions were founded with a total student enrolment of over 100,000 students. But the results of this investment were slow in producing results in society. For example in 1950 there were 1,276 physicians serving Indonesian society and after 15 years the new university system had trained 1,650 physicians, which replaced the original group, but barely made any increase in the total number available for society.[22] This was clearly a nation that was experiencing the difficulties of beginning.

2. *The Political Arena*

a. *Parliamentary Infighting and Cabinet Change*

The parliamentary system was successful in giving the impression that democracy was in full flower in Indonesia, since the parliament fully debated all issues, forcing governments to defend themselves constantly. The system proved successful in forming governments, as six cabinets were chosen in succession without more than the usual amount of difficulty associated with any parliamentary system. Indeed, further cabinets could have been formed if the parliamentary system had not been unilaterally ended by President Sukarno and his supporters outside of parliament. On another level the parliamentary system was not successful over the long run, because the cabinets it formed proved unable to resolve the serious problems confronting the nation, such as the creation of a viable economic system, resolving center-periphery problems, and gaining the transfer of the territory of West New Guinea from the Dutch. More to the point, of course, the parliamentary system was unable to gain enough national influence and respect to keep other contenders for power from mounting challenges for leadership of the nation. The army, the communist party, and President Sukarno all gained power bases that rivaled and ultimately surpassed that of parliament, and then chose to blame parliament for the failures of the era. A long-lived cabinet that could have provided a continuity of action and policy was probably called for, but was not allowed to emerge, except in a non-parliamentary form at the close of the era. Instead, governments changed frequently, untrained leaders were raised to positions beyond their level

[22] R. Murray Thomas, "Indonesian Science Education and National Development," in *Indonesia: Resources and Their Technological Development*, ed. by Howard W. Beers (Lexington, 1970), 202.

of competence and then were jettisoned for newer leaders with even less experience. It is, of course, questionable whether there would have been enough experienced leaders under any other system that might have been established at this time, but certainly the constant turnover of personnel was pervasive in this system, even if it reflected democratic and populist goals of the period.[23]

The creation of cabinets depended on formateurs chosen by the president and often picked from one of the two largest parties, i.e., the Partai Nasional Indonesia and the Muslim party Masjumi, who then worked with party leaders to line up enough participation so that the coalition would have enough votes in parliament to support the programs and policies of the cabinet. It was always assumed that the two major parties would participate and usually they did, but on two occasions they did not. In every case, however, the two parties insisted on certain ministries for their participating members and also for certain other conditions as the price of their participation. Usually there were stumbling blocks to the process, a lot of political maneuvering and, ultimately, concessions when necessity dictated it. Usually each of the two leading parties had three to five seats in the cabinet, which together constituted about half of the cabinet, and the remaining members came from smaller parties needed to make up the needed voting bloc. While the process was not essentially different from that operating in many other parliamentary systems, it was not an altogether wholesome process, as it created coalitions that depended too much on the cooperation of hostile party factions and personalities who treated their own sectors of government as entities separate from general cabinet considerations.[24] This situation was not unique to Indonesia and, in fact, was similar to that operated in Italy and Greece during the same period. As in those countries, there was a constant public complaint about fragile governments, frequent cabinet turnover, and political expediency in bringing down governments in hope that the next cabinet would be more favorable to any given political grouping.

Relations between Masjumi and the PNI were not good from the beginning of their political cooperation in the governments of the Revolutionary period, and working relations between these two parties in the Liberal Democracy era were equally as strained. Both

[23] Feith, *Decline*, 572–578; Noer, *Partai*, 257–271.
[24] Feith, *Decline*, 122–129.

sides looked for ways of creating a cabinet without the other's presence in it and in this each side succeeded once. The differences between the two parties covered a host of subjects, including the form of state Indonesia should have. The prime cause of the dispute, however, seemed to center on political control of the government and the patronage that went with that control. The excessive derogations and insinuations made by both sides leading up to the 1955 election poisoned the atmosphere even further. The Masjumi faction leader Isa Anshary claimed in 1953, for example, that "there is a cold war between Islam on the one hand and on the other are those who call themselves Islamic and are not." He went on to say that the Islamic state, as it had been established by the Prophet at Madinah, insured the rights of members of other religions but gave no protection to renegade Muslims[25] thereby insinuating that PNI members were heretics to Islam. PNI activist Hardi was equally as impolitic, for, in 1953, when speaking in a predominately Muslim region, he stated that the *Qur'an* was "out of date" and not relevant to contemporary Indonesia.[26] Such statements, originating from both sides, made cooperation even more difficult, and contributed to the antagonistic atmosphere of 1958 that prompted Sukarno and the army commanders to end the parliamentary system.

National elections for parliament were delayed until 1955, mostly because of the problems in creating a voting infrastructure. Muslim activists, when united in Masjumi before 1952, were in favor of immediate elections, believing that the Muslim complexion of Indonesia would give Masjumi a majority in parliament instead of the slight plurality they had over the nationalists in the appointed parliament. Even after the split in Muslim unity in 1952 there was a belief that Muslims would still increase their parliamentary strength in an open and honest election. Since a Muslim victory depended on a solid Muslim front, most Muslim parties based their election campaigning on religion and attempted to convince anyone who regarded himself as a Muslim that it was a religious obligation to vote for Muslim candidates. The nationalists and non-Muslims, less sure of their support among the populace in 1950, favored elections at a

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[25] *Ibid.*, 281, 283; Boyd R. Compton, "President Sukarno and the Islamic State," *Newletter of the Institute of Current World Affairs* (March 8, 1952), 1; M. Isa Anshary, *Revolusi Islam* (Surabaya, 1953), 52.

[26] Feith, *Decline*, 350.

later date, believing that a delay would strengthen their position. Since a secular government was already in existence and PNI participation in early governments assured secularists of a number of administrative posts, these secular nationalist groups saw no pressing need to hold immediate elections. This strategy proved correct, for by 1953 the political environment had shifted enough that the nationalists had a stronger hand. President Sukarno had entered active politics on their side, traditionalist Muslims who had split from Masjumi showed a willingness to cooperate at the expense of Masjumi, and the communists were lending their support to nationalist party leadership. The PNI bolstered its popular image in the pre-election period by urging chauvinistic nationalism, particularly the acquisition of West Irian by force, and severance of remaining Indonesian-Dutch ties. The outcome of the election left Masjumi and the PNI approximately where they had been earlier, but gave the Nahdlatul Ulama—NU (Renaissance of Religious Teachers) and Partai Komunis Indonesia—PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) strengthened roles as broker parties.[27] Overall strength in the three parties with Muslim ideologies was 114 seats against parties generally affiliated with the nationalist outlook at 144 seats, which improved the overall Muslim strength which had previously stood at 57 for the Muslims and 118 for the nationalist front. Still Muslim parties, especially Masjumi, were expected to do much better. The results of the election did, however, allow the last parliamentary cabinet of the era to be grand coalition, with all the leading parties except the communists and socialists as participants.[28]

b. *Debates on State Ideology*

A major source of dispute between Muslims and nationalists centered on the unique and peculiar position in Indonesian politics occupied by the *Pancasila* (Five Principles) concept. All groups, including the Muslim community, had accepted Pancasila as a symbol of coop-

[27] The parliamentary seats were assigned after the election as Partai Nasional Indonesia 57 (previously 42), Masjumi 57 (44), Nahdlatul Ulama 45 (8), Partai Komunis Indonesia 39 (17), Sarekat Islam 8 (4), Parkindo (Protestants) 8 (5), Partai Katholiek 6 (8), Partai Sosialis Indonesia 5 (4), Ikatan Penduking Kemerdekaan Indonesia (Veterans Party) 4 (0), Perti 4 (1), 18 other parties 24 (45), and individuals 0 (46). Feith, *Decline*, 434–435.

[28] Willard A. Hanna, "Indonesia's Political Parties," *AUFS Reports* I (December 27, 1956), 4–13, 18; Feith, "Toward," 236–254; Feith, *Decline*, 434–435.

eration among Indonesians and as a statement of Indonesian goals during the Revolution. Consequently, after the Revolution there had been considerable sentiment for its retention as a state motto or expression of national ideals. As a general statement of principle Muslims and nationalists alike felt that it encapsulated nationalist aspirations that all Indonesians shared. Moehammad Natsir, for example, spoke highly of *Pancasila* in a speech at Lahore, Pakistan in 1953, refering to the concept as containing the founding principles of the Indonesian nation. However, later in 1953 the slogan was put forward as a point of ideology by Sukarno and the PNI and promoted as an alternative to the Muslim concept of an Islamic state. After this time those elements in Indonesia that preferred the retention of a secularly based state—the nationalists, the communists and the Christians—began to promote *Pancasila* as the philosophical basis of the state. An organization was founded for the "defense of *Pancasila*," and as Sukarno changed his role from head of state above politics to that of an activist in the political arena, about 1953, *Pancasila* was promoted in opposition to the concept of an Islamic state. In that year the President declared in a speech at Amuntai that "if we establish a state based on Islam, many areas whose population is not Islamic . . . will secede." He made several other speeches of a similar nature and this political campaign had its effect. By 1956, when the Constituent Assembly met to formulate a new constitution, Muslim support for *Pancasila* had almost entirely disappeared and the terms "*Pancasila*" and "Islamic state" were mentioned as diametrically opposed concepts.[29]

It was typical of Muslim activists that saw Islam as an ideology with a transcending claim to loyalty and the Pancasila as a competing, and, hence, false ideology in a society that could rightly be only Islamic. In his address before the Constituent Assembly, but reflecting general Muslim thinking from 1953 to 1956, Moehammad Natsir stated that *Pancasila* was not suitable as a state ideology because it consisted of five relative terms, because no one of the five could be considered to be absolute in nature, and because the "principles" were all relative, in themselves and one to another. He stated that in contrast to *Pancasila*, Islam had laws, given to humans by

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[29] Moehammad Natsir, *Some Observations concerning the Role of Islam in National and International Affairs* (Ithaca, 1954); Feith, *Decline*, 365, 575; Persatuan Islam, *Manifes Perdjuangan* . . . (Bandung, 1958), 22.

God through revelation, which provided an absolute criterion by which to regulate human affairs. Natsir noted that Sukarno himself did not view *Pancasila* as a deep-rooted philosophy, but only as a compromise or meeting place for all the viewpoints of differing Indonesian factions. It was Natsir's judgment that as pure concepts, the principles were incapable of shaping reality in actual situations, and he argued that, if they did, they would no longer be neutral. The vagueness and sterility of *Pancasila*, Natsir concluded, could not convince Muslims who already had a clear ideology to support the *Pancasila* instead of Islam, for to "go from Islam to *Pancasila* . . . is the same as springing from earth . . . into a vacuum."[30]

For their part most politically active Muslim groups maintained that their political goal was the establishment of an Islamic state.[31] In the years prior to the 1955 elections, and even afterward in 1956 when the Constituent Assembly considered the issue, these Muslims saw the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly as the way to establish the principle that Islam would become the guiding philosophy of the Republic of Indonesia. There were two basic viewpoints prevalent among the Muslims as to just how Islamic principles and behavior could be placed into practice in Indonesian society so that an Islamic state could be said to exist. The first viewpoint, held by the Muhammadiyah, maintained that an Islamic society, wherein Islamic principles and practices functioned, was all that was really important and that after a proper society had been founded, the spirit generated by that society would directly determine the content and form of an Islamic state. Although the Muhammadiyah argued that the principles of Islam should be the guide for an Indonesian state, it was less concerned than many other Muslim groups by the necessity of living under secular law for a temporary period, since it believed that with the development of an Islamic society the outlook of the state would change as well and eventually an Islamic system of law would be fully operative.[32]

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[30] Indonesia, *Tentang Dasar Republk Indonesia dalam Konstituante* (Bandung, 1959), II, 129; *Hikmah*, VII, 21–22 (May 29, 1954), 6–7, 37.

[31] The term *negara Islam* (*negara* meaning state or nation) was common among Indonesian Muslims during this period. Occasionally there was reference to *Dar al-Islam*, but this was usually avoided because of possible identification with the rebel group of the same name. Sometimes, apparently to assuage the feelings of non-Muslims, Muslims spoke of a "state based on Islam" (negara berdasarkan Islam).

[32] Muhammadijah, "Ringkasan pidato . . . A.R. Soetan Mansur," (Sumatra Tengah, 1955) 43–44; Muhammadiyah, *Tafsir Anggaran Pimpinan Muhammadiyah (Yogyakarta, 1955)*, 23–24.

The second viewpoint, espoused by the Nahdlatul Ulama, Persatuan Tarbyah Islamyah—Perti (Islamic Educational Union) and most other traditionalist groups, believed that the declaration of an Islamic state had necessarily to come before creation of an Islamic society, and that only after such a state had been formally established would it be possible to give it real religious content. Proponents of this viewpoint believed that a declaration calling an Islamic state into existence would create an atmosphere which would allow Islamic law to be more easily established throughout society and the nation. These groups, moreover, believed that Islamic law as defined in the books of Muslim jurisprudence could immediately become operative in the courts, without any discussion of the difficulties of such a move.[33] Persis activists espoused this particular viewpoint of declaring an Islamic state, although their view of the source of Islamic law differed from that of the traditionalists, even as we discussed earlier.

c. *The Vagaries of Political Islam*

Moehammad Natsir stated in 1950 that "we Muslims do not separate ourselves from politics, and as political activists we are unable to separate ourselves from our ideology which is Islam. For us, the establishment of Islam cannot be separated from the establishment of society, of nation, of freedom."[34] There were similar statements by other Muslim leaders voicing the same sentiment, and it was nearly a consensus among leaders identifying themselves as Islamic that to be committed to Islam was to be committed to the political cause of Islam. It has already been noted in the preceding section on the Revolutionary Era that the Masjumi party came into existence in order to fulfill this place in Muslim action, and it acted in that role until the end of the era. Initially it was the unity party for all activists supporting Islamic ideals in politics, but it lost its monopoly in 1949 with the withdrawal of the Sarekat Islam and Perti parties. In 1952 there was a further diminution of its strength with the loss of the Nahdlatul Ulama, which left to pursue its own political fortunes.[35]

As a Muslim common front Masjumi had among its members many viewpoints on religion, politics, economics and social problems. The chief feature of its operation, as we saw in the preceding section, was that organizational members acted as an important level

[33] *Risalah*, 5 (1965), 11.
[34] Natsir, *Capita Selecta*, II, 157.
[35] Noer, *Partai*, 72–97.

of the party to mobilize their own members for general activity in Masjumi programs and campaigns. Since these organizational members were strongly identified with particular views about the Muslim condition and frequently opposed one another on all sorts of matters, they naturally carried their views over into Masjumi itself. Muhammadiyah, with its concern for social progress and its modernist viewpoint in religious matters, was almost the exact opposite of the Nahdlatul Ulama, which wanted to preserve the traditional religious system that had been dominant in Indonesia before the entry of modernist Muslim activity. These two groups formed the nucleus for two wings or factions within the party, with the Muhammadijah representing what came to be known as the moderate wing and the Nahdlatul Ulama representing the conservative wing. Other organizational members also had their own views that sometimes stood apart from those of the two dominating factions, and this is where the Persatuan Islam made its mark as the voice of "radical Islam," which was unrelenting in its drive for the establishment of an Islamic state and the application of Islamic justice. The relationships among the Muslim factions had always been difficult and, despite efforts to keep doctrinal and practical differences in common perspective, there was heavy friction that was difficult to overcome in moments of crisis and decision. But in the leadership councils there was another split as well between the administrators led by Moehammad Natsir, the party chair, and the party politicians led by Sukiman Wirjosandjojo, a Muhammadiyah leader. This difference was both generational and professional. The younger Natsir group wanted technical expertise and professionalism to be applied to political problems and looked to the socialists for its model. The older Sukiman favored the long-standing art of coalition-building, and looked to the patterns of organizational Islam which often reflected this trait.[36] Both had their counterparts in other parties, including their chief rival the PNI. Significantly both Natsir and Sukiman were prime ministers, but drew on different people within Masjumi and other parties to staff their cabinets, showing how different their approaches really were. The Australian observer H. Feith sees them as examples of the two types of government leaders that divided the ruling duties during this era.[37]

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[36] Feith, *Decline*, 134–139; Noer, *Partai*, 58–61; Anderson, *Java*, 219–224.
[37] Feith, *Decline*, 24–25.

The withdrawal of the Nahdlatul Ulama—NU in 1952 tells us more about the organization and strains within it at that time.[38] NU leaders were particularly bitter concerning the 1949 reorganization of Masjumi in which party control came to be centered in the Central Leadership Council, which was dominated by modernists and by those oriented toward technical expertise. The NU leaders of course, were traditionalists and concerned with coalition-building, so the changes were doubly galling. The reorganization changed the Consultative Council from an active to an advisory role in leadership matters. Originally the council had been designed as a senate of prominent religious scholars to review party matters for conformity with Muslim legal standards. While the full force of that role had never really been exercised, the NU scholars, who regarded that council as constituting their particular Islamic contribution to Masjumi affairs, were miffed at the exclusion of this body from its original role. As an alternative proposal the NU leaders urged that Masjumi be reorganized so that it was no longer an entity seeking its own political goals, but rather a federation of Muslim organizations, each having its own agenda and pursuing its own goals, rather like MIAI was in the late colonial era. That suggestion was rejected by the party congress. This was the backdrop to the NU secession, but the actual decision to break with Masjumi centered, however, on patronage. In the 1952 cabinet formed by Wilopo, the Central Leadership Council put forward the candidacy of a Muhammadiyah scholar for the post of Minister of Religion instead of staying with the NU candidate, Wachid Hasjim, who had held the post in two previous cabinets. This choice was made because of charges circulating at that time that Wachid Hasjim had been involved in the mismanagement of funds during his previous appointment as minister.[39] The Nahdlatul Ulama bolted. After withdrawal from Masjumi an NU congress at Surabaya later in 1952 cited its many complaints against Masjumi, and emphasized that the Consultative Council-Central Leadership Council dispute and the Masjumi refusal to reorganize as a federation were actually the reasons for withdrawal. That congress also reaffirmed the traditional NU position on the importance of the traditional schools of Muslim jurisprudence as the source of Islamic

[38] *Ibid.*, 233–237; Nahdlatul Ulama, "Pedoman Kampanje Pemilihan Umum untuk Madjlis Konstituante . . . 1953," (1955); *Risalah*, 5 (1955); Noer, *Partai*, 81–97.
[39] Feith, *Decline*, 234–235.

teachings and doctrine. A resolution was passed at the Surabaya congress declaring that Muslims must follow a school of jurisprudence, that drawing on the lore of more than one school was not permitted, and that Muslims could only enter political parties that followed the teachings of the schools of jurisprudence. This pronouncement was aimed directly at the leadership council of Masjumi whose modernist principles rejected the whole idea of schools of jurisprudence and placed the *Qur'an* and *Hadīth* in their place as sources of religion.

The NU case shows that extent of differences in Masjumi. To put it in perspective, two other brief examples need to be cited. Policy formulated by the Central Leadership Council was not always appreciated by modernist groups and on several important occasions even cut across Muhammadiyah interests and the issues were serious enough that Muhammadiyah leaders considered leaving Masjumi rather than have to accept directives.[40] Equally the Persatuan Islam, with its emphasis on matters of difference maneuvered constantly for debate within party councils on traditionalist-modernist differences, only to be put off and prevented from discussing them very often. Not surprisingly the leaders of all organizational members of Masjumi—the Muhammadiyah, the Nahdlatul Ulama, the Persatuan Islam and others—maintained the right to speak out for their organizations' interests, and sometimes rejected the contentions put forward by the Leadership Council that to contest issues destroyed Muslim unity. To all of them some matters were more important than unity.

The general elections showed where Masjumi's general strength was. While the party contested nation-wide it garnered most of its strength outside of Java and became the major representative of Outer Island groups, while the Nahdlatul Ulama was supported by the rural populations of Java and Kalimantan. Together the two parties constituted a natural, desired combination of geographic interests that spanned Indonesia, but the split between the two parties illustrates that the Java-Outer Islands differences were not just in economic interests as has been discussed above, but was a cultural reality extending even to the manner in which the elites from the two parts of Indonesia saw religion. While all Muslim elements spoke of eventual Muslim reunification, no real progress was made throughout the Liberal Democracy era. Even such cooperation as was achieved

[40] *Times of Indonesia*, July 7, 1956; *Merdeka*, April 12, 1956.

among Muslim parties in the Constituent Assembly sessions in 1956 was tenuous and functioned only on the common goal of establishing an Islamic state. No real attempt was ever made to resolve basic political and religious differences so that an accommodation would have been possible.

3. *The Rise and Triumph of Non-Parliamentary Challengers*

There were challengers to parliament from the beginning of the republic in 1945 and parliament's supposed preeminence was always under threat from these forces. The three most serious ones were President Sukarno, the army and the communist party. Significantly, it was the combined actions of all three that eventually spelled defeat for the parliamentary system. As regards President Sukarno, he had always wanted a presidential form of government that would give him latitude in dealing with the problems of government. Seeing himself dedicated to overcoming differences, he believed that he had the capability to bring the various ethnic, religious and political groups existing in the archipelago together into a united and integrated republic. But this could only be done if he was given the powers and control over the system to undertake his integrative work. His reputation as an anti-colonial champion and a leader in the Revolution gave him great respect among the population, not only in his home region of Java, but in even remote areas of the republic as well. He chafed under the limited powers his office as president commanded in the parliamentary period, and he regarded parliament as a divider of national effort rather than as an integrative force. Consequently, he was always seeking opportunities to enhance the office of the presidency and to find ways to become involved in the problems of the nation. He was fortunate in that the forces of history were on his side, since there was a trend at this particular period of time in newly independent nations—Burma and Ghana being prime examples—to allow strong rulers to take over from democratic governments that had not fared well in their efforts to start new nations. Within the country he was fortunate as well, since the army leadership under General Nasution, and the communist party under D.N. Aidit, came to see him as an ally and sought cooperation with him. While the two supporters did not necessarily trust one another, Sukarno used both of them to full advantage to promote his own role and to effectively destroy parliament's

ability to resolve problems.[41] In 1957 he assumed emergency powers under a clause of the constitution allowing him to do so and formed a non-party cabinet responsible to him. At the same time he issued a statement, outlining a "conception" of a new political system which featured singular leadership that was directive in nature in order to address the problems of the nation. In 1959 he abolished the existing system by reinstating the Constitution of 1945 and keeping emergency powers to deal with the problems of the country.[42]

For its part the communist party had to reconstruct itself after the debacle at Madiun in 1948 when it had attempted, unsuccessfully, to lead a popular revolt to overthrow and replace the Government of Indonesia. The PKI had lost most of its leadership in that attempt. In the early 1950's the party leadership was reformed by D.N. Aidit, who returned from abroad after a long exile, and new efforts were made to win the loyalties of the peasantry of Java and the workers in the urban trade unions. In this Aidit was highly successful and by the mid-1950's he had a united front, with party membership standing at 1,000,000 members, the peasants association with 3,400,000 million members, a labor union with 2,700,000, the Youth Front at 800,000 members, the women's group with 670,000 members, and several other organizations totaling over 8 million people.[43] This organizational strength made itself felt in the general elections of 1955 when it raised its parliamentary membership from 17 to 39 seats and also supported the election of a number of sympathetic nationalist party members. Parliament, however, did not offer sufficient opportunity for the political power the party wanted because of the relatively small number of seats it controlled and because of the large number of other parties that distrusted them and denied them open access to coalition cabinets. Instead they turned to events outside parliament and used their numbers to provide demonstrations, street rallies and other organizational activities to voice their political views. They orchestrated these themes so that Sukarno's ideas were trumpeted, and he soon acknowledged their usefulness and spoke of them as a force for revitalization of the Indonesian spirit. The party was active in the takeover of Dutch businesses in 1956, and it gave sup-

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[41] Bruce Grant, *Indonesia*, (Melbourne, 1967), 44–47; J.D. Legge, *Sukarno: A Political Biography* (London, 1972).

[42] Noer, *Partai*, 351–368.

[43] Ruth T. McVey, *The Rise of the Indonesian Communist Party* (Ithaca, 1965), 81, 136, 165 and 191.

port to the President when he announced his "conception" for instituting a new form of presidential government in 1957.[44]

The army, for its part, had always considered itself a power faction with an interest in the political affairs of the republic and this attitude had been apparent as early as the Revolution. Like Sukarno, the army leadership was unhappy over the support role they were designated to play in the parliamentary system. There were frequent quarrels with the parliamentary leadership, particularly over funding, command structure and staff assignments. In 1953 an army defiance of parliamentary leadership occurred with a show of military force, and in 1956 on one occasion military officers absented themselves from receiving cabinet officials, including the Minister of Defense, when they visited the East Java region. By 1957, with the crisis of regional defections reaching a high point, the army leadership pointedly indicated that it would only follow the orders of the president. Consequently, with the declaration of martial law in 1957, the army and Sukarno found themselves in close league with one another.[45] Thereafter, in the new climate of outer island rebellion and disillusionment the army was viewed, not only by the president, but by nearly all the political forces still loyal to the republic, as the obvious group with the ability to bring the regionalist threat to bay and save the nation. Army leaders exploited this role fully, both in the remaining days of the republican era, until 1959, and thereafter in the Guided Democracy period.[46]

Although several regionalist movements had actively opposed the central government since 1950, by 1957 disillusionment with the Jakarta government was widespread. In the outer areas local army commanders established governing councils of their own and refused to recognize the authority of the central government. In 1958, a group of dissident political leaders, mostly from the Masjumi Party, formed a revolutionary republic of Indonesia, known as the PRRI, and attempted to bring together all dissident units in a move to win basic political concessions from the Jakarta government. The revolutionary republic demanded more autonomy for the outer areas,

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[44] *Ibid.*, 255–261.

[45] J.M. Pluvier, *Overzicht van de ontwikkeling der Nationalistische Beweging in Indonesië in de Jaren 1930 tot 1942* (The Hague and Bandung, 1953), 145–148, 165–168; Harold Crouch, *Army and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca and London, 1978), 24–36.

[46] *Ibid.*, 35–36.

insisted that a greater portion of the finances that the outer areas' exports earned abroad be returned to the outer areas, and demanded the removal of several leftists, widely believed to be crypto-communists, from cabinet and sub-cabinet posts. The economic strength of the areas under rebel control—Sumatra, parts of Kalimantan and Sulawesi—the support of the armed forces stationed in those areas, and a responsible and well-known leadership appeared at first to give the revolutionary republic a good chance of attaining its goals. The rebellion was easily defeated, however, when, contrary to expectations, the Indonesian army conducted a quick and effective campaign against the rebel heartland in central Sumatra. Rebel units held several areas on Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi until 1961, when army leaders offered a general amnesty and convinced most military units and many civilian leaders in the rebel cause to surrender.[47]

The Masjumi party leader, Moehammad Natsir delayed before joining the rebels in 1958, even though several other leading Masjumi personalities had already done so. Ultimately he gave way and joined the rebel cause, apparently because he believed that insurrection was the only way left to correct the slide to the left and steady deterioration of politics which had marked Indonesia's parliamentary period. In the several weeks prior to his defection he was threatened with physical violence by communist youth groups seeking to discredit him, claiming that he was already loyal to the outer areas cause, and it must have been apparent to him that Masjumi was widely regarded as responsible for the rebellion. In August 1958, he was given the position as vice president in the rebel government, and for the following three years attempted to revive the dissident forces which the government forces had been unable to crush after their initial campaign had outstripped their logistical capacity. Finally, in 1961, Natsir along with other Masjumi leaders, surrendered to central government forces under terms of the general amnesty offered that year.[48]

The Masjumi organization Natsir left behind continued to exist until 1961 when Sukarno banned it by decree, but the institution of presidential rule and a number of state of emergency decrees had

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[47] Palmier, *Indonesia*, 185–198; Williard A. Hanna, "The Rebel Cause" *AUFS Reports*, October 9, 1959. Rudy Pirngadie, *Peristiwa PRRI* (Jakarta, 1958).

[48] Herbert Feith, "Dynamics of Guided Democracy," in Indonesia, ed. Ruth T. McVey (New Haven, 1963, 321; *Bulletin PRRI*, 8 (February 1959), 4; 2 (November 1958), 2.

put an end to Masjumi activity as early as 1959. Anticipating its demise, the organizational members of Masjumi, including the Persatuan Islam, all dissociated themselves from the party in October 1958.[49] Some of these member organizations continued to perform a political role, but many, like the Muhammadijah and the Persatuan Islam, backed away from political life and concentrated on the educational and social welfare aspects of their programs. The era of Liberal Democracy was past and political Islam was forced to find new ways of coping with the changed situation, but that is beyond the purview of this monograph.

4. *The Muslim Community in Transition*

In addition to factors listed in the discussion above there are four additional matters concerning the role of Islam in the events of the era. They deal with the work of the Ministry of Religion, the continued growth of a Muslim literature of learning, the development of Muslim education, and insurgency movements associated with Islam.

a. *The Department of Religion*

The Department of Religion had been established as part of the first government in the Revolution by the Republic of Indonesia and was intended to draw together those functions that affected Islamic life. They included Islamic education, the pilgrimage, the religious court system, the registry of marriages, divorces and separations, and numerous matters dealing with Islamic celebrations and observances. There were small sections in the ministry that dealt with coordination of some Christian, Buddhist and Hindu matters, but the overwhelming work of the ministry dealt with Muslim affairs. Under the leadership of Wahid Hasyim from 1949 to 1953 the ministry gained control over the functions assigned to it and began to take on clear direction. In particular, the mechanism for providing transportation for the pilgrimage was given some priority and a number of ships were made available specifically for that purpose. In education the Muslim system was given legality and efforts were begun to work toward equality of opportunity for graduates from the Muslim system with those of the national education system. As well, the foundations were laid for a higher education system in Islamic Studies,

[49] *Harian Abadi*, October 14, 1958, 1.

which was eventually to become the Institut Agama Indonesia Negeri—IAIN (State Institutes of Islamic Studies).[50]

The Ministry was to have profound effects on the Muslim community, for it provided, for the first time, a governmental unit that could look after the many details of Islamic life in Indonesia and act as a coordinator of the obligatory matters of Islam. Many of these functions, particularly the family court system and the pilgrimage service, had been under Dutch government control earlier, but now they belonged to a government viewed by Muslims as belonging to Indonesians, not foreigners. The ministry did not in this era, or in any era, attempt to completely monopolize the affairs of the Muslim community, but did become an important voice in the coordination of Islamic observance. But there can be no doubt that it took away from the mass organizations a primary function of providing exactly that same sort of guidance which they had exercised earlier. It was now the ministry representative who asked for cooperation among major mosques and religious organization for the observance of major festivals on *Hari Raya*, and who set up local groups for collecting and disseminating the poor tax during the last part of Ramadan. In this and many other matters the Ministry observed the calendar, called important events to the attention of the community, and made arrangements for fulfilling some obligations such as the pilgrimage. While the competence of the staff of the Ministry was not very high in the early days, it did have some notable successes, such as standardizing elementary and secondary education at Muslim schools and providing a registry system for marriages and divorces. While the inefficiencies and low level of training of the ministry during the Liberal Democracy Period led to only slow realization that this role was real, the work had a long-lasting effect on the Indonesian Muslim community.[51] Among the national cabinet agencies, however, the ministry received the lowest budget and was often regarded by nationalist leaders as simply a political creation for the purpose of tying the Muslim population to the state. As such, it was allowed only technical functions and kept away from having any part in major policy decisions affecting Indonesian society. Even in the legal area its courts, dealing with family law, were

[50] Atjeh, *Sedjarah*, 595–611; Yunus, *Sedjarah*, 396–398.

[51] Atjeh, Sedjarah, 665–67; Deliar Noer, *Administration of Islam in Indonesia* (Ithaca, 1978), 75–78.

seen only as advisory to civil courts, which made the final decision on cases.[52] In other ways as well, the Ministry was an agency peripheral to the mainstream of policy making in the Indonesian republic, not only in era under discussion, but in succeeding eras as well.

b. *The Continued Development of a Muslim Literature of Learning*

Even as the nation started over in 1945, the publishing of Islamic texts started over as well. There was much republishing of books and pamphlets from the late colonial period when, as we have seen in the last section, there was a good beginning on building new Islamic literatures in Indonesian and regional languages. For the most part the genre was developed in the earlier era and the new beginning in the late 1940's continued that trend, except for a few notable instances. Significantly this era did not experience a full flowering of Islamic literature, that was to come later in the 1960s and beyond, even though several of the prominent writers were in the process of writing their new contributions. The translation of the *Qur'ān* into Indonesian through the device of the commentary were in full development at this time by a number of individuals and groups and four eventually were completed. Only one, that by Halim Hasan, appeared in this era, but partial texts were printed by the other three, i.e., by Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, Mahmud Yunus and Ahmad Hassan.

Islamic publishing houses and other outlets flourished during this era. The Muhammadiyah and the Persatuan Islam again became primary distributors of books on basic Islamic teachings and, as they did in the late colonial era, they published in local languages, although the language of choice was more and more Bahasa Indonesia. In both of these cases most of the publications were new editions of books and pamphlets originally written in the 1930's, but deemed useful for the new era. In both cases this was reasonable as many of the publications dealt with basic teachings of Islamic belief and practice, and had been written originally without much reference to the events of the time. The Sitti Syamsiyah publishing company also continued to publish, again with its stress on books in the Javanese language, but at a much reduced level so far as works in Bahasa Indonesia are concerned.. But several other private outlets became important, among them Bulan Bintang in Jakarta, Almaarif in Bandung, and al-Islamyah in Medan.

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[52] Daniel Lev, *Islamic Courts in Indonesia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1972), 62–75.

A 1957 advertisement for Bulan Bintang listed 75 books and pamphlets Among the subjects covered were *Qur'ānic* commentary, selections from *Ḥadīth*, life of the Prophet, primers on worship, the pilgrimage, and high holy days celebrations, the importance of the religious teachers in Islam, studies on Islamic law, contemporary politics involving Muslims, and general biography. There were some works from an earlier time, as the pamphlets by H.O.S. Cokroaminoto, Abdullah Aidid, Hamka and Moehammad Natsir from the 1930's, all regarded as pertinent to the condition of Muslims in the era of independence.[53] Among them were a series on Islamic law seen from the Indonesian perspective by Hazairin, and a set of writings on the practice of religion on the basis of the *Ḥadīth* written by Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy.[54] There was an important biography of Cokroaminoto by Amelz, a formulative study on the potential Islamic state by Z.A. Ahmad, a leading Muslim thinker on the subject, and contributions by two Acehnese writers, Hadji Aboebakar and A. Hasjmy, both of whom were to be regarded as important writers in later periods of Indonesian modern history.[55] On the basis of the acclaim these publications received in the Muslim community this series of writings can be considered to have been the leading edge of Islamic publication during the era.[56]

The other two publishing houses were solid, but less prolific. Al-Maarif had a smaller list of publications, about half as many as Bulan Bintang and the authors were not as well known, but their books were mostly first-time publications. Their works included a Indonesian translation of the *Anthology of Forty Ḥadīth* of al-Nawāwī, a translation and commentary of a popular reading section of the *Qur'ān* known as *juz' 'amma* by Iskandar Idries, several works by of the Acehnese scholar M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy on worship and behavior, a book on doctrine by Rasyid Nasar, and a popular telling of the stories in the *Qur'ān* by Arifin Bey, a journalist in Surabaya.[57]

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[53] Umar Cokroaminoto, *Islam dan Sosialisme* (Jakarta, 1938); Cokroaminoto, *Tarich Agama Islam* (Jakarta, [1938]); 'Abdullah 'Aidid, *Nabi Muhammad, s.a.w.*, (Jakarta, 1957); Hamka, *Pribadi*; Moehammad Natsir, *Islam dan Akal Merdeka* (Tasikmalaya, 1947).

[54] Hazairin, *Indonesia: Satu Masjid* (Jakarta, 1950); Hazairin, *Hendak Kemana Hukum Islam* (Jakarta, 1953); M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Sedjarah dan Pengantar Ilmu Hadits* (Jakarta, 1961).

[55] H. Aboebakar Atjeh, *Sedjarah Ka'abah dan Manasik Hadji* (Jakarta, [1950]).

[56] *Berita Bibliografi*, Djan-Des. 1956, 208–209.

[57] Muhyi al-Din Abu Zakariya' Nawawi, *Arbain* (Jakarta, [1950]); Iskandar Idries, *Tafsir Djuz Amma dalam Bahasa Indonesia* (Bandung, 1958); M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy,

The last was still being published in the 1990's. Islamyah in Medan published works written mostly by authors from North Sumatra. There are some notable exceptions in that Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy and Hamka, two authors well-known throughout Indonesia, were included, but both had ties with Medan. Among the publications from local writers was the important *Qur'ān* translation prepared by A. Halim Hasan, which was one of the first to be completed and enjoy wide distribution in both Roman and Arabic script in the northern half of Sumatra and on the Malay Peninsula all the way to southern Thailand.[58] Like the other publishers there were also books on worship, fasting, the pilgrimage, and behavior. There was also a book on marriage by Nurdin Umar that was republished several times, and a collection of sermons by M. Luthan 'Isa. Beyond these publishing houses, chosen as examples, many more existed that issued important works on Islam, such as Saiful in Medan, Tintamas and Neratja in Jakarta, and Siaran in Yogyakarta.[59]

The most prominent writers on Islamic subjects during the period were Hazairin, Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, Dr. Hamka, Muhammad Munawar Khalil and Ahmad Hassan. Ahmad Hassan's contributions will be dealt with in the next chapter. Of the remaining writers, Hazairin is the most unique, both in personality and in his choice of subject matter. He was educated in the Dutch school system and belonged, not to any of the Muslim political parties of the era, but to an off-beat national party where he headed one splinter group that won some seats in the 1955 election. A specialist on customary law, he challenged the prevailing Dutch notions that Islamic law was only valid in Indonesia when accepted by the prevailing customary law units in the various parts of the country. In a series of pamphlets and short studies, notably *Indonesia, One Mosque, Where is Islamic Law Going?*, and *The Issue of Bilateral Inheritance according to the Qur'ān*, he asserted that Islamic law had been developed with an Arabic society in mind and that a new model needed to be developed with Indonesian society as its base.[60] He believed that all the principles

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Kurus Sembahjang dan Doa (Medan, 1950); H.A. Rasyid Nasar, *Rintisan Tauhid* (Bandung, 1953); Arifin Bey, *Rangkaian Tjerita dalam Al-Qur'an* (Bandung, 1951).

[58] Hasan, *Tafsir*.

[59] M. Nurdin Umar, *Iktisar Tuntunan Perkawinan* (Medan, 1956); M. Luthan 'Isa, *Petunjuk dari Mimbar* (Medan, 1950). Selection for the paragraph compiled from Masagung, *Buku Islam sejak Tahun 1945 (edisi ketiga)* (Jakarta, 1994).

[60] Hazairin, *Indonesia*; Hazairin, *Hendak*; Hazairin, *Hukum Kewarisan Bilateral menurut Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta, 1958).

of Islam could be contained in the new jurisprudence without doing damage to any of standard principles of Islamic law and that the result could be readily applied in Indonesian society. Lacking the usual Islamic credentials, his conception was considered a novelty at the time, but gained considerable credence in later years, especially with the rise of the Muslim intellectuals of the 1980s and 1990s.[61] The second writer, T.M. Hasbi Ashshidieqy, later took up the idea of Hazairin concerning the creation of a special law school reflecting Indonesian values, although his thinking and approach were much different. In this era, however, he was not as concerned with this issue as with the elaboration of Islamic values through the use of *Ḥadīth*. He had numerous publications, among them a book on basic theology and creed titled *Theological Teachings: Matters of the Creed*, another on the gathering of *Ḥadīth* and their examination by early Muslim scholars titled *The History and Guide to the Science of Ḥadīth*, one on the methodology surrounding the elaboration of Muslim law titled *The Basis of Islamic Jurisprudence*, a guide to the *Qur'ān The Handbook for Sacrificing on ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā*, and group of historical statements about Muslim governance called *Principles of [Muslim] Government*.[62] Ash-Shiddieqy was mostly a translator of Arabic text into Indonesian, drawing heavily from *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet, without much care as to the subtleties of language or with due regard to good rules of punctuation, consistent spelling or other publishing niceties. On the other hand he provided basic materials in an era when those materials were not always available in Indonesian.[63]

The other two writers were connected with the Muhammadiyah, but otherwise bear little resemblance. During the late colonial era Dr. Hamka had been a magazine editor, a writer of editorials on Islamic matters and a novelist. During this period he emerged as a

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[61] B.J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (The Hague, 1982), 168–171; Sukiati Sugiono, "Islamic Legal Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia: A Study of Hazairin's Thought." MA thesis presented to McGill University 1999.

[62] M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Peladjaran Tauhid: Pokok-Pokok Aqidah* (Medan, 1954); M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Pokok-Pokok Ilmu Dirajajah Hadiets* (Jakarta, 1958); M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Sedjarah . . . Hadits*; M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Pedoman Hukum Sjar'y jang Berkembang dalam 'Alam Islamy Sunny* (Jakarta, 1954); M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Tuntunan Qurban* (Jakarta, 1955).

[63] Boland, *Struggle*, 171ff.; Howard M. Federspiel, *The Usage of Traditions of the Prophet in Contemporary Indonesia* (Tempe, 1993), 75–99; Yudian Wahyudi, "Hasbi's Theory of Ijtihad in the Context of Indoensian Fiqh." MA thesis presented to McGill University, 1993.

scholar working on three of the subjects that mark his investigations, i.e., adoption of Islamic mysticism to modern times, the history of Southeast Asian Islam, and a commentary on the *Qur'ān*. In the first subject era he published two work during this period titled *The Development of Islamic Mysticism from Century to Century* and *Modern Islamic Mysticism*, each with the theme that mystical practice in Islam had a real purpose in helping Muslims remove themselves from the things of this world for concentration on the divine, and that past excesses in such practice ought to be put aside for a reinvigoration of the lessons intended by the Prophet.[64] His study on history titled *History of Islam on Sumatra*, put forward the thesis that Muslims had been in the Aceh region in the same century as the mission of the Prophet, a theory widely accepted by Southeast Asian scholars of Muslim history.[65] His commentary on the *Qur'ān*, which is unique in that it uses Indonesian examples and references, was not published until the following era, but received considerable acclaim later, even being translated for use in Malaysia and southern Thailand.[66] Muhammad Munawar Khalil was a magazine editor in Semarang, prominent as an activist in both the Muhammadiyah and the Persatuan Islam. While some of his work undertaken on behalf of the Persatuan Islam are described in the next chapter, he should be seen in the wider context of the Muslim community, since he did not always write as a member of the Persatuan Islam. He later became known for a well-received study on the *Qur'ān*, but during this era he is known for two other studies, one on the importance of the religious scholar in Islam, which is outlined in the next chapter and a statement on Muslim modernism titled *Return to the Qur'ān and the Way of the Prophet.*[67] Using the same principles of modernist Islam, he explained the Night Flight and Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad in a book titled *The Issue of the Night Flight and the Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad*, asserting, like his Persis colleagues, that both events were real on the basis of references in *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* to them.[68]

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[64] Hamka, *Perkembangan Tasauf Abad ke Abad* (Jakarta, 1955); *Tasauf Moderen* (Medan, 1951).

[65] Hamka, *Sejarah Islam di Sumatera* (Jakarta, 1950).

[66] Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar* (Jakarta, 1983).

[67] M. Munawar Khalil, *Tafsir Qur'an hidaajatur-rahman djuz I* (Solo, 1958); M. Munawar Khalil, *Funski Ulama dalam Masjarakat dan Negara* (Jakarta, 1957); M. Munawar Khalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah* (Jakarta, 1961); M. Munawar Khalil, *Kelengkapian Tarich Nabi Muhammad* (Jakarta, 1954).

[68] M. Munawar Khalil, *Peristiwa Isra dan Mi'radj* (Jakarta, 1961); See also Thoha

c. *The Continued Development of Muslim Education*

The third matter centered on the growth of Muslim schools. Mahmud Yunus, in a book first written in the early-1960s, outlined the major trends in Islamic education for the era. That study showed that there was a flowering of the schools at this time, and that, while a great deal of diversity existed, some common patterns of organization and curriculum were beginning to emerge. Part of this was due to the centralization efforts of the two mass organizations, the Muhammadiyah and the Nahdlatul Ulama, which both emphasized education among their many activities aimed at building the Muslim community. Alongside this development the Ministry of Education also undertook to bring some common standards to the Islamic school system, and those schools under its immediate jurisdiction began to take on a common form. Actually the Muhammadiyah sponsored two different educational tracks: the madrasah track and the public school track. The madrasah consisted of five levels: lower elementary, upper elementary, middle form, secondary, and higher education for teacher training. In 1955 there were a total of 682 madrasah schools of all levels with 594 of them at the lowest two levels. On the public school side the emphasis again was on the elementary level with 675 schools, out of 859, at the lowest two levels.[69] This, of course, corresponds directly to the emphasis placed on elementary education by the governments of this era for broadening the base of education by concentrating on this beginning stage in education.

Yunus clarifies that the Madrasah Dinijah met in the late afternoon or early evening and provided instruction in religion beyond what was taught in the public schools and students who attended had already to be attending public school in at least the second class. The curriculum concentrated on the *Qur'ān*, worship, character, Arabic language instruction, and behavior. The amount of time spent on Arabic was very light since it was offered only in the fourth and fifth years, while behavior or deportment was the major subject in each of the five years.[70] Secondary school, on the other hand, was designed to be a complete school in its own right with both religious and general subjects, but geared to the same level as senior

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Hamim, "Moenawar Chalil's Reformist Thought: A Study of an Indonesian Religious Scholar (1908–1961)." Ph.D. dissertation presented to McGill Univeristy, 1996.

[69] Yunus, *Sedjarah*, 234–235.

[70] *Ibid.*, 235–236.

high school in the public school system. The Islamic section of the six-year curriculum covered theology, recitation and commentary of the *Qur'ān*, substance and examination of *Ḥadīth*, sources and substance of jurisprudence, and Muslim history. Among the general subjects were mathematics, science, language, Indonesian history, geography, social sciences, arts and physical education. The study of language included the elements of Latin, considerable English and Indonesian, and heavy stress on Arabic. When Arabic language was included, the amount of time given to Islamic subjects was about fifty percent of the total.[71]

The Nahdlatul Ulama offered a slightly different alignment of levels according to the examples furnished for its Pondok Pesantren at Jombang. Here three levels were offered: elementary, secondary, and upper secondary, each offering both religious and general subjects in equal amounts. In addition there were special programs for those who wanted the classical boarding school subjects concentrating on religious studies alone, and for memorizing the *Qur'ān*. Books used in the course of studies show that subject matter on the Islamic side of the curriculum included theology, Arabic language training, commentary and recitation of the *Qur'ān*, substance and examination of the *Ḥadīth*, character, and principles and substance of Islamic jurisprudence. Among the books cited for use were standard Arabic texts, such as the *Revival of the Religious Sciences* of al-Ghazālī, the *Commentary of the Two Jalals* by al-Maḥallī and al-Sayūṭī, the *Anthology of Forty Ḥadīth* by al-Nawāwī, and the *Attainment of Desire* by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī. An Indonesian book on *Ḥadīth* examination, the *Analysis of Ḥadīth* by Mahmud Yunus, was included as well.[72]

Finally, looking at the efforts of the Ministry of Religion concerning education, Yunus observes that two important events took place in the Liberal Democracy Era, notably the ordering of schools into an official pattern that could give consistency to education and the introduction of religious education into the public schools. A planning committee of the Ministry of Religion in 1951 did much of the work on ordering religious education, although Wahid Hasjim, the Minister from 1950 to 1952,[73] expended considerable effort in

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[71] *Ibid.*, 239–241.

[72] al-Ghazālī, *iḥyā ʿulum al-dīn*; al-Maḥallī and al-Sayūṭī, *tafsīr jalālain*; al-Nawāwī, *arbain*; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *bulūgh al-marām*, Mahmud Yunus, *Ilmu Mushthalah Hadiets*. Source reference is for Yunus, *Sedjarah*, 215–216.

[73] *Ibid.*, 310.

attempting to improve the level of religious education in Indonesia. In the new schema the Muslim elementary school was set at six years and corresponded in length to the elementary public school. The Muslim middle school was set at four years, which slightly exceeded the public middle school (SMP) set at three years, but the Muslim secondary school was three years, the same length as the public secondary school (SMA). Muslim education through the secondary level was one year longer than the public track. In addition there were special tracks in the Muslim system beginning at the middle school level for those students choosing a career in teaching or in the Islamic justice system. Further, a system of higher Muslim education was also established, called Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri—PTAIN (The State Islamic Higher Education School). The first two PTAIN schools were established in Jakarta and Yogyakarta.[74] As it turned out this standardization of the madrasah system was to assist with the orderly growth of Muslim education alongside that of the public schools and offered a clear alternative with a 50–50 mix between religious and general subjects. This filled an important gap in the Indonesian education system at the time and allowed Muslim mass organizations an important role in developing such schools at a time when the government itself did not have the capacity to expand education so broadly on its own. The venture into higher education, while initially viewed as merely a means of training officials for the Ministry of Religion, had wider implications for Muslim society, offering an alternative to the public university system for a somewhat underprivileged sector of the society and one that had difficulty competing for places in the national system. But that occurred after the era under discussion. At this point only a beginning was made; but it was a significant beginning, as was proved later.

Religious education in the public schools was regulated by the Ministry of Religion, even as the general subject matter in the madrasah system was regulated by the Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (Ministry of Education and Culture). In 1951 these subjects were given form, structure and content. For example in the fourth class of the public school 80 hours of Islamic material was given, consisting of four subject areas: belief, behavior, worship and the *Qur'ān*. The instruction concerning belief centered on God's exist-

[74] *Ibid.*, 320.

ence and his attributes. The study of worship focused on the meaning and purpose of worship in general, but also instruction in proper ritual readings connected with prayer itself. The study of the *Qur'ān* gave attention to correct recitation, with an emphasis on selections dealing with worship, apparently as an interrelationship with the teaching section on worship. The curriculum plan regarding behavior concentrated on respect toward elders, teachers and people in authority, love of nation, personal responsibility, regard for creatures, dumb animals, and the general environment, and concern for those in society who are sick, poor and otherwise unable to help themselves.[75] It appears in all four sections of religious learning the emphasis was on the practice of religion or the application of religion to society.

The traditional boarding schools did not come under state regulation or guidance at this time, nor was there public support for their operation. According to Z. Dhofier there was a commonality in their teaching methods and curriculum, but certainly not uniformity. The scholar-teachers who ran them continued to use standard teaching devices of the *bandongan* and *weton* system in which the teacher read and explained a text to any number of students, and the so-called yellow books, usually written in Arabic, were used as textbooks, where passages, selections and entire books were memorized. Mostly the texts were from the middle period of Islamic history, between the twelfth and nineteenth century, but in a few places some twentieth century authors were used and in other places some texts were created especially for their classes by Indonesian authors using the Indonesian language itself. While the madrasah system attracted most of the attention in the Muslim education system at this time, the boarding schools did not lose their appeal and seem to have fared reasonably well.[76]

d. *Islamic Identification and Regional Dissidence*

As we have observed in this section most Muslim groups were convinced that an Islamic state could be achieved by democratic means in the Republic of Indonesia; this perception held that all people identified as Muslims—about 90% of the population at the time—would eventually favor such a move. Even disappointment in the

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[75] *Ibid.*, 328–329.

[76] Zamzkshsyary Dhofier, "Contemporary Features of the Javanese Pesantren," *Mizan*, 1, 2 (1984) 28.

general elections, where Muslim parties combined took about 50% of the vote—far from the 90% figure—did not alienate these Muslim believers from the system, since they believed there would be ample opportunity later for realizing their political goals. However, this policy of cooperation in a secularist state in hope of changing the existing order was not shared by all Muslim groups. A small, but significant number refused to recognize the Republic of Indonesia as the legal government of Indonesia. The Darul Islam (Islamic State Movement) in West Java, which appeared during the Revolutionary Era, and was described in that section, was one of those recalcitrant groups whose leaders believed an Islamic state was possible immediately and declared one to exist. Unwilling to recognize Indonesian state sovereignty, it carried on a low-level insurgency in the mountains of West Java. Immediately after the transfer of sovereignty in 1950, the Darul Islam became involved with several Dutch renegades who attempted to use the movement to embarrass the government in Jakarta and upset the integration of West Java into the Republic of Indonesia by attacking urban areas. After a important attack against Bandung had been repulsed by Indonesian army forces, the Darul Islam resumed its low-level insurgency in relatively isolated areas. The governments of the era used both "carrot and stick" approaches, by offering amnesty and by vigorous patrolling of infected areas, occasionally clashing with the guerrillas. Neither effort seemed to gain much headway.[77]

As was discussed in the section on the Revolutionary Period, Masjumi leaders spoke out against the insurrectionist aspect of the movement, but favored an end through political settlement because the earlier association of Kartosuwirjo, the Darul Islam leader, with the general Muslim leadership and because of the ideal of the Islamic state that he propounded. Consequently, throughout the 1950's, Moehammad Natsir, speaking as the leader of Masjumi, spoke out against government's attempts to resolve the problem by force of arms. In 1952, for example, he stated that the rebels should not be dealt with harshly since they had aided in the struggle against the Dutch and that the very existence of the groups in the first place was because it was part of the Indonesian revolutionary forces fighting the Dutch. He went on to say that the attitudes and actions of the rebel groups did conflict with those of the Indonesian Republic, but

[77] Jackson, *Traditional*, 18–20.

that he believed that through discussion and a sincere effort to understand the rebel problem on the part of the government, a solution acceptable to both sides might be found.[78] Natsir's repeated appeals were strongly criticized by PNI leaders as misplaced loyalty to fellow Muslims; they held that negotiations were a waste of time and that military force should be used to resolve the issue. The communists charged that Natsir and Masjumi followed a conciliatory approach toward the rebels because Masjumi was in fact in league with Darul Islam and other Muslim dissident groups.[79] Although Masjumi spokesmen constantly reiterated that it was not connected with the Darul Islam, its soft stand on the rebel issue allowed communist propaganda to build a popular image that Masjumi and the rebel movements were connected in some way.

Beyond the immediate issue of the Darul Islam itself, there was also the added danger of other Muslims becoming identified with it as an alternate political authority in Indonesia. This in fact occurred as disillusioned groups from Aceh, Sulawesi and Kalimantan ultimately declared themselves to be outside the Republic of Indonesia. Although in each case their disputes with the government of Indonesia were about regionalism and ethnicity and only in part about religion, they found it convenient to turn to the Darul Islam and declare solidarity with that movement because of its symbolism in portraying an uncompromising Islamic ideal. The most serious case occurred in Aceh in 1953 when an insurgent movement headed by Daud Beurueh, a prominent leader and former governor, attacked Indonesian army forces and then declared itself to be a province of the Darul Islam under the leadership of Kartosuwirjo. The precipitating reason for the rebellion seems to have been the refusal of the Indonesian government to make Aceh a province instead of appending it to the province of North Sumatra under the dominance of Batak leaders. However, concerns about Islam, about morality and about the secular direction of the Indonesian nation were important factors as well. A strategy of withdrawing to inhospitable terrain was again successful in Aceh and Indonesian forces and government officials were only able to control the urbanized areas and those near army encampments.[80] The government ultimately was successful in negotiating an

[78] Natsir, *Capita Selecta*, II, 196.
[79] *Harian Rakjat*, (November 11, 1954) 9.
[80] Feith, *Decline*, 345–348; Sjamsuddin, *Republican*, 319–331.

end to the dispute through an offer of amnesty and the creation of Aceh as a special province with the right to enforce Islamic law in its territory, but this was not accomplished until 1961, after the era under discussion had ended. The association of the Acehnese with the Darul Islam had little practical application since communications between the two areas was almost non-existent and even the perception of what Islamic values should be followed were vastly different. Generally Kartosuwirjo's group followed modernist principles, while Daud Beurueh's group was inclined toward traditionalist interpretations.

Kahar Mudzakkar's Momoc Ansjarullah (Spirits of the Helpers of God) in Central Sulawesi and Ibnu Hadjar's Kesatuan Rakjat Jang Tertindas—KRJT (Union of Oppressed Peoples) in South Kalimantan were older rebellions, dating to the period of the United States of Indonesia in 1950, which chose not to join the Republic of Indonesia. Along the line they made contact with Kartosuwirjo and agreed to form a united front with him in his goal of creating an Indonesian Islamic state. Mudzakkar's case was especially galling for Masjumi because the Masjumi government under Natsir negotiated an end to his rebellion and agreed to integrate his forces into the Indonesian army, but when it came time to give allegiance to the Republic, Mudzakkar's forces left the city with all the new equipment they had been given and once again took up the rebellion in difficult terrain in central Sulawesi. The government led by the Masjumi leader Sukiman was in power at the time and suffered a severe public relations defeat, especially since his own party had engineered the terms of peace that had allowed the deception.[81] The Ibnu Hadjar case was a low-level insurgency in southern Kalimantan that resisted government security forces as well, and also tied itself symbolically to the Darul Islam.[82] These two rebellions were finally settled with amnesty arrangements in the early 1960's under the leadership of army chief of staff General Haris Nasution.

Regional disputes were not always associated with Islam, of course. The Republic of the South Moluccas case, which rivaled the Aceh defection in constituting a threat to the integrity of the nation, was associated with a Christian population, and had also been a primary source of recruits for the Dutch security forces both during the late

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[81] Feith, *Decline*, 212–213; Indonesia, *Sekitar Pemeriksaan. Perkara-perkara Affandi Ridhwan dan Achmad Buchari*" (Jakarta, 1954).

[82] JPRS, *Selected Translations on Indonesia*, No. 4 (n.d.), 5–6.

colonial period and during the Revolution itself.[83] Many of its leaders, activists and former members of Dutch forces ultimately found their way to the Netherlands where they carried on their disaffection until in the 1990's, despite repeated efforts of the Indonesian government to come to terms with them. Also, as has been discussed in the section on the end of the era, the regionalist movements of 1956 and 1957 were not religious in nature either.

[83] Feith, *Decline*, 69.

CHAPTER FIVE

PERSATUAN ISLAM ACTIVITY IN THE LIBERAL DEMOCRACY PERIOD

A. *Prelude—Participation in the Revolution (1945–1949)*

The Persatuan Islam was not reestablished until 1948, but its members supported the republican effort from the very beginning. Younger members of the organization actively participated in the Sabillah and Hizbullah, the paramilitary organizations formed by Masjoemi in the final two years of the Japanese occupation, which became part of the Indonesian defense forces during the Revolution. Moehammad Isa Anshary held posts in the Sabillah organization in the West Java residency and was also a member of the local "national committee" of the same residency, which functioned as a local government in the early days of the Revolution. Moehammad Natsir was Minister of Information in the republican government until 1947 and thereafter supported the republican effort as editor of the influential daily *Voice of the Republik (Suara Republik)*.[1]

Ahmad Hassan wrote two pamphlets supporting the republican government in early 1946 that identified Muslim political activism with the new Indonesian state. He stated in *Sovereignty*, apparently written to answer impatient criticism by some Muslim factions concerning the Sukarno government and convince them of the need for unity, that "they [the nationalists] proclaimed independence and we [Muslims] sought shelter in an independent nation. . . . We must give them our thanks."[2] Muslims, he continued, should have patience and later, when it would become possible to decide the matter of a permanent state with permanent laws, "we will establish a government for Indonesia on the sacred law of Islam." Ahmad Hassan recognized that until that time came, Indonesia would be a secular state and that there would be many shortcomings, but added that those shortcomings caused by secularism should be combated peacefully—

[1] Parlaungan, *Hasil*, 158, 175–176.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

"with orderly sermons and advice.[3] Muslims were, for example, to use their influence with local officials and the police to check and eliminate improper behavior among the population. "Using force" to erect an Islamic system in the state at that time, stated Ahmad Hassan, "would result in slander and the heavy outpouring of blood," and cause "civil strife that could be used by our enemies." He concluded in *Seizing Power* that until the opportunity arrived for the formulation of a permanent constitution, that it was incumbent upon the Muslim groups to "honor the government and its policies" and not undertake action detrimental to it.[4]

In preparation for the great debate on national ideology he believed would ultimately take place, Ahmad Hassan published a short monograph in 1946 titled *Government in the Islamic Manner.* This text, which was an attempt to reconcile Islam's political theory with modern democratic theories of government, claimed that democracy was hardly alien to Islam and, indeed, had been used in the election of the first caliph Abū Bakr. It may have been that the world really learned about democracy from Islam.[5] Islamic government was based both on the *Qur'ān* and on consultation of the people; because Islam had certain rules that could not be transgressed, it eliminated many of the pitfalls of contemporary democracy based merely on the will of the people, which may choose many evils "even drinking alcohol and permitting prostitution"[6] He concluded that the forms of Islamic democracy were no different than those of other democracies, and that officials, like prime ministers, and institutions, like cabinets and parliaments, would be needed even with Islam.[7]

The Persatuan Islam was reestablished as a functioning organization in April 1948,[8] a short time after Isa Anshary and other members who had constituted a republican government for the West Java region at Garut were allowed by the Dutch to return to Bandung under the terms of the 1948 Renville Agreement between the Dutch and the Republic of Indonesia.[9] The proclamation stated in part:

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[3] Hassan, *Kedaulatan*, pp. 17–19.
[4] Ahmad Hassan, *Mereboet Kekuasan* (Malang, 1946), 19.
[5] Hassan, *Pemerintahan*, 6–8, 3.
[6] *Ibid.*, 13.
[7] *Ibid.*, 10–11, 19–21.
[8] Abdul Haris Nasution, *Sekitar Perang Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Bandung, 1984), VII, 178.
[9] Atjeh, *Sedjarah*, 224.

"We, the Central Leadership of the Persatuan Islam announce that as of April 1, 1948, the Persatuan Islam has resumed functioning. It is generally known that before broken by World War II, the Persatuan Islam was a movement whose special struggle was in the field of religion alone. With this announcement, we continue that religious struggle. We call to all branches of the Persatuan Islam and their sections to continue their work as usual by observing national laws."[10]

Also in 1948 the Dutch established a state in West Java, called Pasundan, in an attempt to have a government in that region that would be responsive to Dutch interests, rather than the Republic of Indonesia. Actually the Renville Agreement earlier in 1948 had called for a plebiscite in the West Java area, but the Dutch interpreted this in their own way, holding several congresses of selected Sundanese nationalists, who established Pasundan without a plebiscite election called for in the agreement. This state, regarded as a Dutch puppet even by large segments of its own population, endured until 1950 when it dissolved itself and was incorporated into the unitary Republic of Indonesia.[11] Despite the large number of Sundanese among Persis membership who might have been expected to have some sympathy with a Sundanese state, Persis activists mostly opted for the republican cause. For example, on April 13, 1948, the Persatuan Islam participated in a conference of religious organizations in the Bandung region to discuss the Pasundan State and other matters, and called for separation of elements of the Muslim community from the Pasundan State.[12] This movement was spear headed by Persis activist Isa Anshary, which worked for the republican cause in West Java until Pasundan entered the Republic of Indonesia.[13]

Through his periodical *Islamic Alignment (Aliran Islam)*, started in 1948 and issued in Dutch-controlled Bandung, Isa Anshary published articles openly favoring the republican movement. His articles reflected the dislike in West Java for the "second Dutch police action" in 1948 that had captured Sukarno, Hatta and other important republican leaders, and challenged the subsequent Dutch announcement that the Republic of Indonesia no longer existed.[14] When the Dutch

[10] Nasution, *Sekitar*, VII, 178–179.
[11] Kahin, *Nationalism*, 368–369, 445.
[12] Nasution, *Sekitar*, VII, 179.
[13] Parlaungan, *Hasil*, 158.
[14] Kahin, *Nationalism*, 343.

proceeded with plans to establish indirect rule over the archipelago by forming a United States of Indonesia from fifteen states and special areas recognized by the Dutch, Isa Anshary stated that such a federation should not be formed without participation by the imprisoned republican leaders. "... It must be with the knowledge," he stated in "Outline of Our Struggle," that the Indonesian people stand behind the Republic of Indonesia, stand behind Sukarno and Hatta."[15] A like attitude on the part of delegates meeting to form the United States of Indonesia, combined with renewed fighting by republican forces in central Java, and international pressure by many countries through the United Nations, ultimately pressured the Dutch to release those leaders.

Despite his support of the secularist leaders of the Republic of Indonesia, Isa Anshary, like Ahmad Hassan, did not lose sight of the goal of establishing an Indonesian state based on Islamic principles. In *The Philosophy of Islam's Struggle*, written in 1949, he noted that Muslims were participating in the struggle for independence to "erect a nation in the grace of God as fulfilling their responsibility as Muslims."[16] The nation Muslims strive for, Isa Anshary concluded, "regulates and gives guidance and life concerning the basic truths of the human community, whether in the field of politics, economics or social affairs."[17] This was a reiteration of the Muslim political stand made in the late colonial era and was indicative that the issue remained an important part of the political ideology of many Muslims, and especially that of the Persatuan Islam.

B. *The Liberal Democracy Era (1950–1959)*

During the late colonial period, emphasis in the Persatuan Islam was on individual activity rather than on organization, and this same emphasis was apparent until the mid-1950's, when concern for the direction of the educational program, for the maintenance of uniform standards of quality in those schools, and for following a united policy in all the organization's branches led to the reorganization of the Persatuan Islam on a more formal basis than had existed

[15] *Aliran Islam*, 3 (January 1949), 124.
[16] M. Isa Anshary, *Falsafah Perdjuangan Islam* (Bandung, 1949), 13.
[17] *Aliran Islam*, I, No. 3 (January 1949), 122–125.

before that time. The result was a formalization of the relationship between the branches and the central organization, the establishment of various youth, women and student auxiliaries, the issuing of house publications; in general, all the trappings of a regular Indonesian organization seeking to gain its ends through organizational activity. Still, despite this new emphasis on organization, some individuals stand out as leaders in their own right within the wider Muslim community regardless of their activist roles in the Persatuan Islam itself. Ahmad Hassan and Moehammad Isa Anshary clearly fulfill those roles during this period of time.

1. *Organization and Membership*

The Persatuan Islam grew appreciably after being reestablished and at the end of the Liberal Democracy era had approximately 10,000 members. This figure included members of the Persatuan Islam Isteri (Association of Wives), the Djamijatul Banat (Association of Young Women), and the Pemuda Persatuan Islam (Association of (male) Youth). While attending Persis schools, male students would belong to a student organization called the Ridjalul Ghad (Men of Tomorrow) and female student to an organization called the Ummatiatul Ghad (Mothers of Tomorrow), both of which were concerned only with student activities at the school and had no other political or social ends. After graduation, all students, both boys and girls, joined the Tanstiqul-Uchuwwah (Students' Reunion) which met each year at various locations in West Java to discuss efforts for the propagation of Islam in Indonesia.[18]

The organizational structure of the Persatuan Islam was centered in a central board or secretariat at Bandung. At the headquarters there were several departments for directing and coordinating the activities of the Persatuan Islam: the Islamic Information Unit was responsible for producing informational materials about Islam and spreading the Persis message; the Education Unit was concerned with curriculum matters and teaching materials for the twenty schools of the organization; the Distribution Unit issued materials deemed important to the membership; a Women's Unit coordinated women's affairs; and the Youth Unit was concerned with the activities of the various student and youth groups.[19] Branches of the Persatuan Islam

[18] Interview with K.H.E. Abdurrahman and Junus Anis, July 21, 1963.
[19] *Ibid.*, *Risalah*, III, 20 (April 1965), 4; I, 1 (June 1962), 12.

were located throughout West and Western-Central Java and a few other branches were found outside this area in Palembang on Sumatra and at Bangil in East Java. Branches of the organization were listed as existing in Bandung, Simpang Tjiawi, Tjikalong-Kulon, Tasikmalaja, Serang, Tjisomang, Sumendang, Tjitjalengka, Lekong-Buahbatu, Radjapolah, Palembang (South Sumatra), Magung, Padalarang, Pinang, Purwakarta, Serang, Tjiandjur. All of the above, except for Palembang, are located in West Java.[20] Each branch undertook activities corresponding roughly to those of the central organization, although some branches lacked educational or printing facilities. In general, however, the work of the branches centered about education, with nearly every branch having a school, ranging from elementary in most places, to the teachers' education courses at Sumendang and at Bandung.[21]

At Bangil, where Ahmad Hassan reestablished his school and printing press, a second center of primary activity arose. Much of the organization of the Bandung operation were repeated and the publication activities of the Persatuan Islam were centered there, with only minor publication occurring in Bandung itself. Also the school established at Bangil had a heavier input of Islamic subject matter as opposed to the Bandung model where Islamic and general subject matter was almost equally divided. While the two centers were in general communication with one another, shared a similar concern with Islam, and pursued cooperative policies in the political realm, there appears as well to have been a great deal of autonomy of operation by the Bangil branch, undoubtedly because of the senior status of Ahmad Hassan, who had, after all, dominated the association in the earlier period.

2. *Leaders and Concepts of Leadership*

When the Persatuan Islam was formally reconstituted in 1948, Moehammad Isa Anshary became general chairman and continued in that position until 1961.[22] Moehammad Natsir, although he became chairman of the Masjumi Party in 1949, still retained ties with the Persatuan Islam and helped re-establish the educational facilities at Bandung in the 1950's.[23] Ahmad Hassan became an important figure

[20] *Risalah*, I, 6 (August 1962), 57.
[21] *Risalah*, I, 1 (June 1962), 13.
[22] Nasution, *Sekitar*, VII, 178.
[23] Persatuan Islam, *Pesantren*, p. 6.

in Muslim education and, as in the late colonial period, expressed strong views about political matters and the role of Islam in them; he died in 1958.[24] Abdurrahman, who had been an assistant to Hadji Zamzam earlier and active in propagation activities among the Sundanese, became Secretary General when the Persatuan Islam was reestablished in 1948, a position he held throughout the period; ultimately he succeeded Isa Anshary as general chair in 1962.[25] Hadji Moehammad Munawar Khalil served for a considerable period as representative of the Persatuan Islam on the Department of Religious Affairs' board of Islamic scholars until his death in 1962.[26]

Several personalities emerged as public personalities and Persis spokespeople during the Liberal Democratic Era. Moehammad Isa Anshary was from West Sumatra and arrived at Bandung in 1932, at the age of 16, to enter a political movement headed by Sukarno and undertake religious learning from Ahmad Hassan.[27] Later he worked with Moehammad Natsir.[28] Moehammad Ali Alhamidy, from West Java, became a writer during the era and was active in building a school on Persis lines in Jakarta. He remained an important spokesman for committed Islam in the Guided Democracy era and in the early days of the New Order era.[29] Abdulkadir Hassan, the son of Ahmad Hassan, was prominent in the operation of the schools at Bangil established by his father, and continued the practice, initiated by his father, of issuing fatāwā on a large number of subjects.[30] Other prominent members at Bandung were K.H.E. Abdullah and K.H.I. Sudibjo, and at Bangil there were Mohammed bin Salim Nabhan, Abdullah Musa and Anwar Katsir.

The central theme of the Persis activists during this period was their concern with the "modern age of ignorance," caused by human departure from spiritual values for the attainment of technical progress. This was a concept rising throughout the Islamic world at this particular period and was promoted by groups with a fundamentalist orientation. Later in time Sayyid Quṭb in Egypt and Abdul A'la

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[24] *Hikmah*, XI, 32 (November 22, 1958), 13.
[25] Interview with K.H.E. Abdurrahman and Junus Anis, July 21, 1963; *Hikmah*, XI, 22 (August 2, 1958), 2–21.
[26] *Minggu Abadi*, February 28, 1960.
[27] Atjeh, *Sedjarah*, 219.
[28] Parlaungan, *Hasil*, 156–157.
[29] *Hikmah*, XII, No. 6 (March 14, 1959), 11–13.
[30] Hassan, *U-Shul Fiqih*.

Mawdūdī in Pakistan, were to develop the theme substantially. In Indonesia it was Isa Anshary who gave the theme expression in his speeches and writings. In particular he criticized Western technical progress which has developed the material manifestations of life, but "sink man into the valley of darkness" as far as spiritual values are concerned. The conditions of the Age of Ignorance at the time of the Prophet are similar to the modern period, he maintained, in that the human spirit, in the midst of "bombs, artillery and atomic weapons" still thirsts ". . . for eternal concepts." The many "isms" have clouded peoples' vision and led them to confuse their own "desires and passions with the overall good." What humankind needs, Isa Anshary stated, is an absolute guide, and such a guide is provided by Islam, with its unchanging belief in God, its sacred law and its community.[31] Apparently, his fellow activists in the Persatuan Islam agreed with him.

In the Persatuan Islam, there was general recognition that religious scholars had an important role in society, a role that extended into all areas of human life, including politics. Undoubtedly this viewpoint was based on the importance of the religious scholar in Muslim history where they repeatedly functioned as guardians of pristine and practical Islam against questionable political authority, dangerous intellectual trends, and popular trends that took Islam away from its original purpose and design. The retention of such figures of authority seemed a logical continuation of dynamic Islam in the view of Persis activists. Moreover Persis leaders strongly implied in their writings that they themselves constituted the new religious scholars that should assume the role in directing a revived and vigorous Islamic movement in Indonesia. In line with this claim they took on the titles and forms of the traditionalist religious scholars of Java in many ways. First, they assumed the title *kiyai*, a title of respect for those scholars operating religious boarding schools in rural Java. Although Ahmad Hassan never took the title, many others in the organization did, and they also emphasized the title of *Haji* after undertaking the pilgrimage. Second, they called their teaching institutions *pesantren* and *pondok* in imitation of the traditional boarding schools, even though their schools stressed a different kind of education than the traditional boarding schools did. Third, following the example

[31] Anshary, *Falsafah*, 15, 45.

of Ahmad Hassan earlier, they issued *fatāwā* on their own authority, and eventually spoke of the legal system that emerged from the sum total of these *fatāwā* as Islamic law, a term used by traditionalists as well.

Persis writers made occasional references in their books and articles concerning the role they considered appropriate for the religious scholars to play in society and in national affairs. Munawar Khalil wrote an entire book on the subject explaining the historical role of religious scholars as transmitters of the *Qur'ānic* message and as guardians of its truth. He maintained that because of their considerable reputation, lay Muslims would often respond to religious scholars when they would not necessarily respond to similar orders from state officials. He concluded that since religious scholars had such considerable influence over the faith and morals of the Muslim population and were listened to on political and social matters as well, the religious scholars had a great responsibility to act with prudence and wisdom.[32] Isa Anshary stated that it was the duty of the religious scholars and other Muslim leaders to educate ordinary Muslims in the "lessons of religion [and] laws of God" so that they would follow a course of action that would bring reward to the Muslims in this world and in the Hereafter.[33] Moehammad Natsir also believed that the religious scholars had a significant role to play in political affairs, and in a number of speeches, he called on religious scholars to give guidance to lay Muslims on political as well as religious affairs.

The use of the term "religious scholar," the assumption of the traditional role and duties, and the imitation of traditionalist scholars of Java, however, did not change the Persatuan Islam's commitment to modernist Muslim principles or affect ideological views of Islamic values. Strikingly, over time many members of the Persatuan Islam came to be regarded as religious scholars in the classical sense of the word, probably to the disdain of the traditionalist scholars. But the assertion and acceptance of the claim gave them a different stature in the Muslim movement, one which enhanced their role and widened their arena of action.

This stress on religious scholars as an accurate voice of religious judgment and wisdom reached a conclusion in December 1957 when the Sixth Congress established a formal council of religious scholars

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[32] Khalil, *Funksi*, 27–28.

[33] M. Isa Anshary, *Ummat Islam Menghadapi Pilihan Umum* (Surabaya, 1953), 69.

to consider how the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* applied to the operation of the Persatuan Islam itself. Named the Madjelis Ulama Persatuan Islam (Council of Islamic Union Scholars), the body was given a veto on all statutes, *fatāwā* and actions of all units of the association. Hence, the council became a board of review for the entire organization and gave an aura to the organization that it was governed directly by sacred law in its daily functioning. The original membership of the council included jurists from Bangil, Bandung, Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Solo, Semarang and Pekalongan. It included long-term members such as E. Abdurrahman, Ma'sum, E. Abdullah, Ahmad Hassan and Abdul Qadir Hassan and "associated" members, such as T.M. Hasbi Ashshiddieqy, Munawar Khalil and Imam Ghazali. While their *fatāwā* were to have some impact on actions during the period under discussion, its impact in the 1960's appears to have been much stronger.[34] D. Wildan suggests that the model for the council may have been the Legal Council of the Muhammadiyah[35] and that may have been the case, but the actual role and duties of the council in overseeing the *fatāwā* of the association were more in keeping with the Consultative Council of the Nahdlatul Ulama, the ideological adversary of the Persatuan Islam.

Even as the role of the scholar was promoted, the leadership of the Persatuan Islam denied that its organization was intended to stifle the individual initiative of its lay members. In an address given after the end of the period under discussion, but still reflecting attitudes dating all the way back to the 1920's, E. Abdurrahman stated that "the Persatuan Islam does not have central management . . . but, rather, central leadership. It does not regulate members, but . . . guides its members. Those who are "managed" are only inanimate objects which have no energy of life. But we guide members who have energy of life, members who live, who cannot even be compared with the lifeless forms which have no energy or power, who have no aims, directions or ideals for life. Every branch [of the organization] has similar leadership . . . who guide living members, who are marked with determination and ideals. All of the [organization's] leadership is like that, and it wants to be "centered," not acting on its own and alone without relations of one with another, but rather as exerting power with purpose, aiming toward achieving goals and ideals."[36]

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[34] Persis by-laws in Wildan, *Sejarah*, 141.
[35] *Ibid.*, 142.
[36] *Risalah*, I, 6 (August 1962), 56.

The manifesto of the Persatuan Islam in 1958 had the same regard for its members, noting that the general membership was extremely important in the overall struggle of Islam in Indonesian society. The association, the manifesto stated, was not a mass organization as many other Indonesian movements were, but a small, elite group, where the spirit and dedication of its members allowed them to serve as the vanguard of the Islamic movement in the country.[37]

The number of women in the Persis organization, in its schools, and in propagation activities throughout the period reflected a highly visible role. *Report of the Islamic Union Women*, the official organ for the women's unit published in the 1950s, indicates that there were such units at six of the branches of the Persatuan Islam, namely at Bandung, Melong Tjimahi, Mataram Utara in Jakarta, Magung Tjiparaj, Pamanukan, Bima and Tanjung Priok. During this period leadership was exercised by Marjam Abdul Rahman (d. 1956),[38] who was general editor of *Report of the Islamic Union Women*, Chair of the central board, key representative of the association to other Muslim women's conferences, and honorary chair of most large propagation meetings. Also of importance were Romlah Nachrawi, the secretary of the central board, and Rukmini, the chair of the youth (girls) unit and activist in propagation. The women's unit focused on education of children, propagation activities among women, including training of activists, publishing a newsletter, operating a small bank cooperative among members, and supporting the family responsibilities of members.

3. *Educational Programs*

Persatuan Islam leaders, like most other Indonesian Muslim leaders, believed that a religious-oriented education was preferable for all Muslims and that education in the national education system alone was not sufficient for meeting Muslim needs. Moreover during the time period under discussion the national educational system was only evolving and there was not enough school buildings or qualified teachers to meet the total requirements of the nation. Consequently private organizations were allowed considerable leeway in sponsoring their own schools and given support from the government through

[37] Persatuan Islam, *Manifes*, 35.
[38] *Hudjdjatul Islam*, I, 1 (Augustus 1956), 33–34.

the Ministry of Religion and sometimes the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The Persatuan Islam's educational system had its headquarters at Bandung in the Education Unit, which was established in 1955 to standardize all religious instruction in the schools of the Persatuan Islam and maintain the same degree of quality throughout the system. By the end of the era under discussion the Persatuan Islam operated over twenty schools throughout West and Central Java, a number of special teachers and "informants" courses, and two boarding schools at Bangil. According to Persis statistics in 1955, there were approximately 6000 students enrolled in its schools. Except for its several teachers' and theological training courses, Persis training concentrated on elementary and secondary courses designed to provide a lay Muslim not intending to become a religious official an adequate education with considerable religious content. "It is an ordinary education for ordinary pursuits," stated Junus Anis, a Persis activist and teacher, in an interview in 1963.[39]

The *Pesantren Ketjil* (Small School) in Bandung provides a good example of the Persis educational system, since it had nearly all the types of training afforded by the Persatuan Islam. The elementary school was six years in length. During the first two years of primary school, seventy-five percent of school time was allotted to the study of religious subjects and twenty-five percent to general subjects, while in the last four years the instruction time was equally divided between the two types of study. Religious subjects included Arabic (writing, speaking, syntax and grammar), readings in Arabic literature, and lessons in Islam itself dealing with creed, the *Qur'ān* (content, recitation, commentary and exegesis), *Ḥadīth* and the life of the prophet, jurisprudence, ethics, religious obligations and Muslim history. General subjects included geography, history, arithmetic, Indonesian, and language instruction in the vernacular—Javanese and Sundanese. The teachings materials were from both Malay/Indonesian and Arabic.[40]

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[39] Interview with K.H.E. Abdurrahman and Junus Anis, July 21, 1963.

[40] The following texts were used: Ahmad Hassan, *Sharaf* (Bangil, 1949); Abdul Hamīd Hakīm, *Al-Bayān* (Sumatra, 1930); Muṣṭafā ibn Muḥammad Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī, *Al-Nazārāt* (Cairo, 1920), 3v.; Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsji, *Kalilah wa dimnah* (Singapore, n.d.); Bilāj al-Akh, *Safinat al-Balaghah* (Cairo, 1907); *Al-Dibāj* (Cairo, n.d.); M. Abū Zayd, *Hady al-Rasūl* (Cairo, 1925); Aḥmad ibn Sharqāwī, *Tawhīd* (Cairo, n.d.); Ḥusayn ibn Sulaymān al-Rashīdī; *Bulūgh al-Marām* (Cairo, 1881). Yunus, *Sedjarah*, pp. 260–261.

Sixty percent of the secondary school work at the Bandung school consisted of religious subjects, with stress on acquaintance and rules of usage of *Ḥadīth*, Arabic grammar, syntax, rhetoric and pronunciation, and sources and content of Muslim jurisprudence. General subjects consisted of Indonesian, English, arithmetic, geography, psychology, some health and some education. Many textbooks were in Bahasa Indonesia, including several written by Ahmad Hassan, but several Arabic works were used as well. During the first two years of secondary training, courses were predominantly religious in scope and during the last two years the emphasis was on general subjects.[41]

The preparatory courses for teachers and the theological courses lasted from six weeks to three months. Course work was almost entirely religious in nature since the purpose was to train a person for a religious occupation. These courses were given on an ad hoc basis rather than following a regular schedule.

Persatuan Islam schools in other cities in West Java and elsewhere numbered twenty in 1955 and had a total of approximately 6000 students enrolled.[42] Some of these schools offered only elementary training, while others offered secondary education as well. Some, such as the Sumendang branch in West Java occasionally operated three-month teacher preparatory courses.[43] Persatuan Islam schools were established either by the branches of the Persatuan Islam located in their respective cities, or by teachers returning to their home towns after having received training at the Bandung or Bangil schools, following the tradition of boarding school students for over a century. Educational standards varied greatly throughout the system, although by the end of the era considerable work had been accomplished to provide minimum standards and a uniform quality of education.[44]

The higher education facilities of the Persatuan Islam were located in Bangil where a school for young men operated, beginning in 1951, with the name *Pesantren Putra* (Boarding School for Young Men),[45] a five year course of study. Entering students were required to be at least eighteen years of age, have a secondary education or its equivalent, and to be able to read and write Arabic. Subject matter was similar to that of other Persis schools, i.e., Arabic, *Qur'ān*, *Ḥadīth*,

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[41] *Ibid.*, 261.
[42] Interview with K.H.E. Abdurrahman and Junus Anis, July 21, 1963.
[43] *Risalah*, I, 1 (June 1962), 11.
[44] Interview with K.H.E. Abdurrahman and Junus Anis, July 21, 1963.
[45] Persatuan Islam, *Pesantren*, 16–17.

sources of jurisprudence, and doctrine, for instance, but greater depth and understanding was required. General subjects included education, political science, and comparative religion. The school was intended to prepare religious officials, and many did take up posts with the Department of Religion, or became officials in various schools and mosques; others took additional training at Al-Azhar in Cairo before returning to Indonesia to become teachers themselves.[46]

A parallel school for young women, called the *Pesantren Puteri* (Boarding School for Young Women), was opened at Bangil in1957. It had a five year course of instruction to train young Muslim women for becoming religious teachers and activists. Entering students were required to have completed elementary schooling and to have a reading and speaking knowledge of Arabic. Seventy percent of the course work concerned Islam and its sciences, including sources of jurisprudence, *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* commentary, Arabic and ethics. General subjects included English, Indonesian, education, courses on womanhood, political science, geography, algebra and biology. All women were required to live in the residence hall, dress in the manner prescribed by Persatuan Islam, and conduct themselves properly according to general Islamic standards. Enrolment grew fast and by 1963 fifty young women were enrolled.[47]

The Persatuan Islam's educational system operated on funds received from a number of sources. General operating expenses were covered from tuition paid by students' families and from a grant the Indonesian government gave all schools teaching a required number of general courses.[48] Buildings and capital equipment were dependent upon pious endowment, gifts, and grants from charitable institutions.[49] The mosque and school of the Pesantren Ketjil in Bandung, for example, were built on endowment land provided by a gift from the estate of Hadji Zamzam, and part of the expense of the building was paid by a gift from a leading woman activist of the association, Maryam Abdur Rahman, The Pesantren Putra in Bangil was built largely with grants from various Muslim charitable institutions.[50]

The education received at Persatuan Islam schools had more religious content than many other educational systems operating in

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[46] *Ibid.*, 6–9. Interview with Abdulkadir Hassan, July 13, 1963.

[47] Persatuan Islam, *Pesantren*, pp. 16–17.

[48] See M. Hutasoit, *Compulsory Education in Indonesia* (Paris, 1954), 68–69.

[49] Interview with K.H.E. Abdurrahman and Junus Anis, July 21, 1963; Interview with Sofwanhadi, July 13, 1963.

[50] *Risalah*, I, 1 (June 1962), 11.

Indonesia, as we saw in the discussion on education in the last chapter. At the schools operated by the Muhammadiyah for example, the selection of general subjects was greater, and a more even balance was maintained between religious subjects and general subjects.[51] Persis education utilized Indonesian as the language of instruction, while stressing the importance of Arabic for religious sources, in comparison to many boarding schools which believed that Arabic should be the language of instruction in religious subjects.[52] On the other hand Persis education was more diversified than that offered by the higher education programs operated by the Department of Religious Affairs which concentrated almost solely on religious subjects.[53] Ahmad Hassan appeared to be thinking along similar lines in the last few years of his life, and he advocated revision of the organization's higher education effort to concentrate on religious subjects to the exclusion of many general subjects.[54] That this did not occur probably indicates that there was sentiment against it among his group at Bangil, who may have seen general subjects of value to modern Indonesian Muslims.

4. *Preaching and Dissemination of Information*

Aside from formal education there was considerable stress in the Persatuan Islam with general propagation of Islamic teachings among the general public. The bylaws of the association pointed to the necessity of such activity, calling for male and female activists "to deepen meaning and enrich the knowledge regarding sacred law and teachings of Islam."[55] In the section on education above it was reported that there was course work for aspiring activists in this field and that there was concern with their training. Moreover, it was also reported that propagation activities (*tabligh*) were undertaken among the Sundanese Muslim population and this effort continued in the Liberal Democracy era. Leading activists were always on call, giving Friday and holy day sermons, addressing small gatherings and taking part in large-scale propagation events.[56] The heavy work of

[51] Cf. Yunus, *Sedjarah*, 233–248; Hutasoit, *Compulsory*, 74–79.
[52] Yunus, *Sedjarah*, 85–87.
[53] *Ibid.*, 354–360.
[54] *Hikmah*, XI, 32 (November 22, 1958), 14.
[55] As cited in Wildan, *Sejarah*, 131–132.
[56] *Ibid.*, 133.

this duty, however, was borne by the various units of the association, particularly the women's unit and the alumni associations. A short history of the association makes a distinct point of the role of propagation activists in the early 1950s throughout West Java and suggests that these activists were responsible for the establishment of several new branches at Magung, Sukabumi and Pamanukan.[57]

The women's unit was particularly active in this effort. An editorial stated that that one purpose of the newsletter *Report of the Persatuan Islam Women* was to offer materials that would be useful for a heightened awareness of Islamic teaching among its lay members. To that end the newsletter featured articles in each issue that covered aspects of Islamic doctrine and proper performance of worship. For example, the May 1953 issue carried a lengthy exposition on *Qur'ānic* verse, Tin 3, in expository style similar to a sermon or homily, which had several references to other verses in the *Qur'ān* having relevance to the discussion. The section on worship in that same issue covered ritual washing prior to prayer; this was done in hypothetical question and answer style so that the reader could be brought through the proper steps of washing.[58] There are also reports on propagation activities such as the report from the Bandung branch that they had a circuit of 13 locations in Bandung regularly visited by activists to provide information, and that other meetings were held in neighboring locales.[59] A grand session was held in May 1953 by the Bandung branch with 1,000 people attending, including the wives of the provincial governor and the Bandung city mayor.[60] This was followed in December 1952 with a program in Pamanukan at the local cinema with 2,000 people attending, about three-fourth of them women. Chair Maryam Abdur Rahman opened and closed both meetings, there was a *Qur'ān* reading, and a number of activists addressed the assemblage on both occasions. At the second meeting the subjects covered were: amity among believers, social responsibilities of Muslims, the training of girls and young women, the role of religion in troubled times, an example of Islamic success from an historical incident, and the necessity for Muslim obedience to God as general practice.[61]

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[57] *Risalah*, I, 1 (June 1962), 10–11.
[58] *Berita* Persistri, 3 (May 1953), i, 1–5, 6–8.
[59] *Ibid.*, 11.
[60] *Berita Persistri*, 4 (September 1953), 14.
[61] *Berita Persistri*, 5 (January 1954), 10–12.

5. *Publications*

The high regard for publication that marked the Persatuan Islam during the late colonial period continued after the organization's reestablishment. As an organization the Persatuan Islam issued a number of reports, memoranda, books, magazine and newsletters, and several *fatāwā*. A party statement titled *The Struggle Manifesto of the Islamic Union* appeared in 1957 after its adoption in late December 1956 at the Persatuan Islam Congress held in Bandung.[62] It was the most comprehensive description of the association's *raison d'etre*, clarifying its role as a vanguard organization in bringing new Islamic awareness to Indonesian Muslims, through the principles put forth in the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*. Drafted in large part by the General Chairman M. Isa Anshary, it clarified the organization's stance on further Islamization of Indonesia through propagation efforts to overcome general "superstitions" in society, evidences of "innovation" in Islamic worship, and application of Islamic standards as a matter of course in national affairs. The document also contained a ringing indictment of communists as implacable enemies opposed to the just establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia, and questioned the motives of the nationalists and Christians as political allies because they were regarded as impediments to the deepening of Islamic values in the general population. In addition to its publication by the Persatuan Islam as a single document, this manifesto appeared in serial form in *Wisdom (Hikmah)*, a magazine identified with the Masjumi party, in 1957.[63] An earlier manifesto in the form of a joint *fatwā*, signed by 11 jurists and leaders of the association, had been issued in 1954, which was a condemnation of communism as it operated in Indonesia. This is discussed more fully in the section on politics.

Four magazines and one newsletter were published by various branches of the Persatuan Islam. At Bangil the *Islamic Defender (Pembela Islam)* and *The Muslims (Al-Muslimun)* appeared. The first had only a short run in 1956 and was concerned mostly with politics, particularly the role of Muslims in the political process; its contents are discussed fully in the next chapter under political thought. Named after its famous predecessor of the 1930's, it was highly ideological in tone and major coverage was given to the Muslim political position in Indonesia. The "question-answer" format was used exten-

[62] Persatuan Islam, *Manifes Perdjuangan Persatuan Islam* (Bandung, 1958).
[63] *Ibid.*, *Hikmah*, X, 1–2 (January 12, 1957) through 6 (February 9, 1957).

sively, although the responses were not as well documented in historical Islam as in earlier publications. The answers were often short, simplistic and lacked much scriptural justification; only a few of them were thoughtful and well researched. Still the questions and the answers for these *fatāwā* tell us much about the Persis position on political matters, and the particular justification for such viewpoints. *Al-Muslimun*, which began publication in 1955 and continued on through the end of the era, was concerned with the development of Muslim jurisprudence on the basis of modernist Muslim principles, primarily as developed by Ahmad Hassan and his son Abdul Kadir Hassan. The content of this magazine is described in a following section of this chapter and also in the section on reaction to contemporary sociological and technological trends in the next chapter. At Bandung a magazine titled *The Islamic Authority* (*Hudjdjatul Islam*) was published in 1956, but that effort ended after one issue. It was labeled the official magazine of the Persatuan Islam and contained several important articles relating to the history and viewpoint of the movement. Of particular importance was a biography of Ahmad Hassan and a description of contributions he had made to the association. A second article by E. Abdurrahman argued that the traditionalists use of the term "people of the Prophet's way and community" as applying only to them was to deny modernists their proper identification with an important symbolic term used throughout most of Muslim history. Other articles dealt with Islamic history and contemporary Indonesian political matters. In contrast to most magazines published earlier in Persis history, this publication contained no *fatāwā*. *The Voice of the People of the Way and Prayer Community (Suara Ahlis Sunnah wal Djama'ah)*, a monthly magazine, was published for a short time in 1956 by the Jakarta branch of the organization. The choice of that title may have been related to Abdurrahman's article on the appropriateness of the title for modernist Muslim usage. The newsletter, published by the Women's Unit and titled *Report of the Islamic Union Women (Berita Persistri)*, has already been described above in the section on dissemination of religious information.

Republication of books written earlier constituted one group of publications issued by the press at Bangil. A brochure issued in 1950 listed twenty works of this sort, including three important publications titled *Queries and Resolutions, Prayer Guide* and *God's Unity*.[64] As

[64] Persatuan Islam, *Sual-Djawab*; Hassan, *Pengadjaran Shalat*; Hassan, *At-Tawhid*.

we have seen in the section on education above, *Prayer Guide* was used in Persis schools as a textbook. *Queries and Resolutions*, contained *fatāwā* written throughout the 1930s; it became a popular publication for lay Mulims interested in the application of Muslim law to their own lives. *The Balance*, a commentary on the *Qur'ān* begun in the 1930s for use in propagation sessions, was developed further and became popular among modernist Muslim lay readers throughout Indonesia.[65] This publication was the culmination of earlier commentaries made by Ahmad Hassan which were limited to specific *sūrāt*.[66] The audience for such republished texts was rather diversified and speaks well for their applicability in a new era.

Among the new books published during this era there are two groupings: those dealing with political matters and those dealing with Islamic life and teachings. In the group dealing with political matters were a number of works published by Persis members that, like Ahmad Hassan's *Islam and Nationalism* before independence, attempted to adapt fundamentalist Islam to the political situation existing in independent Indonesia. Isa Anshary's *Islamic Revolution*, for example, outlined Muslim hopes for the establishment of an Indonesian state based on Islamic principles; his *The Red Threat in Indonesia* warned Muslims and Indonesians against the ideology and practices of Communism, which he saw as contrary to both religion and nation; and his *Islam and Nationalism* indicated the similarities and differences between Muslim and secularist actions and goals.[67] All of these works are covered in the section on political thinking later in this chapter and in the next chapter on political thinking. Munawar Khalil's *The Function of the Religious Scholar in Society and the Nation*, describing the collective group of Muslim scholars as a political elite, also belongs to this series of works; the gist of its message has been described above in the section on organization.[68] All of these books were published outside of the association, although clearly identified as belonging to members of the Perstuan Islam. Published by the Persatuan

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[65] Hassan, *Al-Furqan*.

[66] *Ahmad Hassan, Al-Djawahir (Permata-permata) Ajat dan Hadits* (Bangil, 1957); Ahmad Hassan, *Tafsier Surah Jasien dengan keterangan dan ringkasan* (Bangil, 1951); and Ahmad Hassan, *Al-Hidajah (djuz amma)* (Bandung, n.d.).

[67] Hassan, *Islam dan Kebangsaan*; M. Isa Anshary, *Islam dan Nasionalisme* (Bandung, 1954); M. Isa Anshary, *Revolusi Islam* (Surabaya, 1953); M. Isa Anshary and Jusuf Wibisono, *Bahaja Merah di Indonesia* (Bandung, 1955).

[68] Khalil, *Funksi*.

Islam itself were three works by Ahmad Hassan, *Sovereignty, Seizing Power* and *The ABCs of Politics*.[69] The first two have been discussed above in the section on the Revolution and the last one has not been reviewed. S. Mughni asserts that these three political works illustrate Ahmad Hassan's acceptance of democracy as an important part of political behavior and belie the label of "fanatic" that was attached to him during the 1950's for unbending insistence on the establishment of an Islamic state.[70] A fourth book by Ahmad Hassan, *Dictionary of Terms A to Z Inclusive* was a dictionary of foreign terms in use in Indonesian writing and speech, particularly in the area of politics.[71] The selection contained European, Malay, Hebrew, Indonesian, Sundanese, Tamil, Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit terms.

New books dealing with Islamic life and teachings included a study of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence by Abdul Kadir Hassan titled *Principles of Jurisprudence*, which outlined the methodology developed by classical Muslim scholars for the formulation of Muslim jurisprudence.[72] It indicated that despite the concern Persis authors had for relying on the texts of classical scholars for interpretations of the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*, the methodology of the clas-sical scholars in examining those sources and making *fatāwā* was completely acceptable. This was the first of a series of texts on development of legal sources that Abdul Kadir was to publish, however, the remainder of the series appeared after the era had passed. There were a number of books with diverse subject matter prepared by Ahmad Hassan in this area. *O My Grandchildren* was concerned with proper behavior for young Muslims, reminding them not to fall victim to modern secularist behavior; *Handbook for the Pilgrimage*, was a guide for properly undertaking the pilgrimage to Mecca; *Muslim Women in Councils and Leadership Posts* discussed the role of Muslim women in public affairs and designated their activity to areas where men were not involved, and; *History of the Night Journey and Ascension of the Prophet*, a study holding that the miraculous happenings of these two important events in the life of the Prophet, happened in reality and were

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[69] Hassan, *Kedaulatan*; Hassan, *Mereboet*; Ahmad Hassan, *ABC Politik* (Surabaya [1948]).

[70] Syafiq Mughni, "Warisan A. Hassan dalam Arus Pemikiran Islam di Indonesia," in *Pak Natsir 80 Tahun*, ed. Endang Saifuddin Anshari and M. Amin Rais (Jakarta, 1998), 10.

[71] Ahmad Hassan, *Qamoes Rampaian A sampai Z tammat* (Malang, 1950).

[72] Hassan, *U-Shul-Fiqih*.

not imaginary, accomplished through dreams, or symbolic.[73] Ali Alhamidy's *Islam and Marriage* explained Muslim marriage procedure, belief, and customs.[74]

6. *Political Activism*

Certainly the Persatuan Islam had a direct interest in furthering Muslim political goals before 1945, but Persis members and the organization itself were even more politically committed after independence. Its leaders stressed that the Persatuan Islam was a religious organization, but to establish Islamic ideology in society it was necessary to engage in political activity.[75] The association's program of 1956 was very pointed in the commitment of the entire membership to political accomplishment. In that document all Muslim participants in politics were divided into three groupings, i.e., "conservative-reactionary," "modernist-liberal," and "revolutionary-radical." The members of the Persatuan Islam were identified as belonging to the "revolutionary-radical" group, because they wanted to confront the problems of society head on and deal with them with the application of the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*, instead of applying outmoded teachings as the "conservative-reactionary" group wanted to do, or accepting unacceptable compromise as the "modernist-liberal" groups tended to do.[76] Three assumptions were made, namely that a society only improves itself by changing itself internally, that a society's improvement depends directly through the change wrought by its individual members, and that improvement of society was a matter arising from below, i.e., the general membership, while addressing the problems of sin and corruption was a matter to be handled from above by the leadership.[77] Finally, the revolutionary approach was seen as aiming toward the attainment of three goals, namely the creation of an Indonesian Islamic republic with the commitment of Islamic laws enshrined in the constitution, the placement of committed Muslim politicians and administrators

[73] Ahmad Hassan, *Hai Tjoetjoe-koe!* (Surabaya, 1948); Ahmad Hassan, *Risalatul Hajj* (Bangil, 1971); Ahmad Hassan, *Perempoean Islam di Dewan dan Podium* (Bangil, 1940); Ahmad Hassan, *Sedjarah Isra' dan Miradj* (Bangil, 1949).

[74] M. Ali Alhamidy, *Islam dan Perkawinan* (Jakarta, 1951).

[75] *Persatuan Islam, Manifes*, 1956, 24.

[76] *Ibid.*, 26.

[77] *Ibid.*, 10.

in positions that controlled the power of the state, and the realization of a prosperous and fraternal society motivated by godly intentions.[78] These themes had their origin in the writings of M. Isa Anshary beginning in the late 1940's and were more fully expressed in statements and manifestos thereafter. While the statements of their own accord do not insist on commitment of all Muslims to politics, they certainly did imply that at least some members would be politically active and that those not fully involved would support those who were.

There were times when the Persatuan Islam as an organization propounded clear political views as in the case of the 1956 program mentioned immediately above. The *fatāwā* of its religious scholars dealing with political issues also were issued under the name of the organization, but with the names of the agreeing scholars. However, in all cases, these involved statements of principles. Usually, however, Persis activists speaking or acting politically generally did so through the medium of some other political organization considered to be concerned with the interests of Muslims, such as Masjumi or the Front Anti-Komunis (Anti-Communist Front). The nature of the post-independence political debates over national direction, state structure and relationship between state and religion often led the Persatuan Islam directly into the political arena. On those occasions, the organization issued statements, manifestos and *fatāwā* that had, and were meant to have, direct political consequence.

a. *The Special Relationship with Masjumi*

Persis leaders, as individual religious scholars, participated in the November 1945 Muslim conference that established Masjumi as the unity political party of all Indonesian Muslims.[79] When the Persatuan Islam was formally re-established in 1948, it entered Masjumi as an organizational member, joining the Muhammadijah, the Nahdlatul Ulama, and others which already held that status. A primary role of an organizational member was to act as an information and recruiting center for gathering political support for the Masjumi organization. This meant giving advice to its own members about political matters, especially about proper and improper political associations

[78] *Ibid.*, 48.
[79] *Ibid.*, 36.

for Muslims, and encouraging them to support Masjumi. One of the purposes in publishing the *Islamic Defender* magazine in 1956 may have been to heighten political awareness among Persis membership itself, as well as the Muslim community in general. That magazine exerted much effort in encouraging , and even commanding, Muslim participation in politics under the aegis of a Muslim political party, i.e., Masjumi. A second role of organizational membership was akin to the first, namely supplying activists for Masjumi membership and leadership. Members of the Persatuan Islam were urged—and later almost required—to join Masjumi as individuals, and several Persis activists were selected by the Masjumi leadership as core members, the name assigned to respected religious scholars and lay leaders who were to serve as guides for the larger party membership.[80] M. Isa Anshary, E. Abdurrahman and Fachruddin Al-Kahiri were Masjumi members with that status. Finally, organizational members undertook common endeavors with other organizational members and Masjumi itself for activities that would enhance the Muslim mission in Indonesia.[81]

This organizational membership gave Persis activists new outlets for their energies. Not only could they become politically active in the ranks of Masjumi, but Masjumi publications and newsletters were open to them as well. Probably the most advantageous relationship was with the magazine named *Wisdom*, published between the years 1947 and 1960, which was generally reflective of the Natsir wing of Masjumi. *Wisdom* printed a large number of statements and articles by Persis members, particularly Isa Anshary, Moehammad Natsir (for a time the periodical's general editor), Ali Alhamidy and Munawar Khalil and all key manifestos of the Persatuan Islam appeared in that publication. In becoming associated with a Muslim political association the Persatuan Islam leadership was following its own tradition in supporting the Sarekat Islam early in its history and later becoming an organizational member of MIAI in 1937. While it was still recognized as a non-political organization in its own activities, the contact with a political party in this way gave the Persatuan Islam a context that certainly spelled out political preferences that the cadre regarded as important.

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[80] Atjeh, *Sedjarah*, 216, 285.
[81] Persis archival documents as cited in Wildan, *Sejarah*, 96–97.

General thinking in the Persatuan Islam was that all Muslims had a duty to be politically active for the realization of religious goals in the new nation-state, and Persis members were expected to be an important part of that effort. As reported above, this attitude was apparent in the writings of Ahmad Hassan even during the Revolution, and in the period of Liberal Democracy such expectations were reiterated in the writings and speeches of Isa Anshary, clearly stated in the manifestos of the Persatuan Islam itself, and supported in several important *fatāwā* of its jurists. The 1956 manifesto stated, for example, that the efforts of the Persatuan Islam were "not limited to creed and worship," but also "to struggle in the political realm for achieving victory for Islamic ideology."[82] Isa Anshary was even more direct when he stated that "politics itself is an instrument by which to achieve Muslim ideals."[83] He used a classic Muslim argument for his stance by outlining the situation confronting Muslims in the 1950s as falling under the category of universal obligation, where a religious duty was essential and general, so that all Muslims were required to strive for its fulfillment. Isa Anshary maintained that the effort to institute Islamic laws and ideals in the new Indonesian state and society was beyond the capacity of leaders or cadre alone to accomplish. Instead, the effort required was massive and "even with the efforts of the entire community it will not easily be achieved." Under this condition every available Muslim was required to participate.[84]

On the basis of such arguments, most Persis members apparently did join Masjumi, and several even achieved some distinction as leaders. Immediately after independence Moehammad Natsir became prominent in Masjumi, and in 1949, after holding several junior cabinet positions in the republican government, he became general chairman and generally accepted leader of the modernist faction of the party. By 1950 Natsir, while still a member of the Persatuan Islam and adviser to its leadership council, was involved with Muslim matters at a trans-community level and his statements reflected his wider constituency rather than that simply that of the Persatuan Islam. He went on to become a member of parliament and a delegate to the Constituent Assembly. Isa Anshary became a member of the leadership

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[82] *Persatuan Islam, Manifes*, 1956, 24.

[83] Anshary, *Revolusi*, 30.

[84] Anshary, *Islam*, 59–60; cf., Natsir, *Capita Selecta*, II, 136–137 for use of these terms in a broader context.

council of Masjumi in 1955, was its provincial leader in West Java throughout the period, and also built a place for himself as leader of an influential faction of Masjumi. As a member of Masjumi he was a member of parliament and also a member of the Constituent Assembly. His views on political matters, reflecting a great commitment to realization of Islamic principles in state and government without much compromise with other political views, seemed to best reflect those of the Persatuan Islam activists in general and, of course, was consistent with Persis views from the late colonial period. Ahmad Hassan remained a spokesman for committed Islam and with his statements and *fatāwā* strongly supported Isa Anshary's ideological positions, but was not active himself in Masjumi political activities. He did serve as a a member of the important *Madjelis Sjuro* (Legal Council), the council of Masjumi dealing with applications of Muslim law and was involved in some disputes over the findings of the council on contentious issues.

It was typical of the Persatuan Islam that, while it was fundamentalist in religious matters and thus frequently allied with the reforming or moderate wing in Masjumi on many points, it was so uncompromising on other matters that it often was regarded as an arch-conservative faction. A manifesto in 1953 described the association as "wanting to change society to its very roots," and to "shatter the illness of the Muslims in a radical and revolutionary manner; clearly, without disguise, without hesitancy, with firmness."[85] This view can best be described as wanting the fundamentals of religion operative throughout society. The Persatuan Islam emphasized—even as it had before the war—that the performance of basic religious obligations, i.e., prayer, alms-giving and the pilgrimage, and particularly the performance of these obligations in the prescribed manner, free of all "innovations," was an essential step in creating a strong, healthy and effective Muslim body politic. Persis leaders believed that an important purpose of Masjumi was to bring Muslim factions together where differences of principle and associated problems between the various groups might be solved through consultation.[86] Several Persis manifestos noted that solutions to problems

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[85] *Persatuan Islam, Manifes*, 1956, 26.

[86] *Khilafiyah* is literally "differences of principles" and among Indonesian Muslims the dispute concerning accepted interpretation (*taqlīd*) and open interpretation (*ijtihād*) was considered to be a difference of principle. *Furū'* is the consequent

dividing the Muslim community could easily be found and a clear and effective Muslim viewpoint established if all Muslims would accept the *Qur'ān* and the Way of the Prophet as the ultimate guides in their consultations.[87]

As we saw in the preceding chapter, there was a controlling group within Masjumi that believed that discussions of religious differences would not lead to consensus, and, indeed, were much more likely to produce ill will that would harm Muslim political unity. Consequently this controlling faction generally prevented any such discussion, whether raised by the modernists or traditionalists. Persis statements condemned attempts to block discussion and stated that the Persis' willingness to cooperate with other Muslim groups could never mean a halt in its efforts to cleanse religion of innovation and to resolve matters of difference in the Muslim community. "The Persatuan Islam cannot accept the standpoint that to strengthen unity, questions of principle and associated matters should be frozen. The Persatuan Islam cannot remain quiet toward any such betrayal [of its religious principles]."[88] As we have seen in the last chapter this viewpoint was not the complaint of the Persatuan Islam alone, but echoed the views of several other organizational members. Actually, the challenging tone of Persis manifestos in maintaining the organization's right to speak out on religious differences within the Muslim community may have been politically oriented as well as religious in nature. Isa Anshary was frequently criticized in Masjumi for striking too hard a line in politics, particularly in his vitriolic attacks against nationalists which made working relationship with them difficult for Masjumi leadership. He received further criticism for implying that those Muslims who did not completely agree with his

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disputes growing out of the differences of principle, but not differences of principle themselves. In a short essay on the subject Ahmad Hassan attempted to provide guidance for eliminating many of the differences among various Muslim groups. 1) When there are contradictory views on a religious subject it is necessary to examine the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. Whatever these sources confirm "we accept" and "that which has no basis we reject." 2) In a matter in which conflicting views are supported by *Ḥadīth* (with no *Qur'ānic* clarification), it is necessary to reject the weak *Ḥadīth*, and to take the viewpoint of the *Ḥadīth* which have the better claim to be genuine. 3) When *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* conflict on a matter, it is necessary to reject the *Ḥadīth*. *Hikmah*, IX, No. 37–38 (October 12, 1956), 34. Acceptance of Ahmad Hassan's suggestions would of course follow the doctrine of the Persatuan Islam and would exclude the commentary of the traditionalist texts on the matter.

[87] *Ibid.*, 64; Anshary, *Falsafah*, 73.

[88] *Persatuan Islam, Manifes*, 1956, 25, 26.

line of thinking were apostate.[89] While the issue of communal differences was only a minor controversy within Masjumi, Isa Anshary, who was the principal drafter of Persis manifestos, may have directed the statements on principles and associated differences primarily as a riposte to his critics, whom he probably saw as desiring to stifle all his religious and political pronouncements. While the majority of Persis members did follow Isa Anshary's approach in politics, there were many who chose the more moderate approach of Moehammad Natsir. Even this latter group, and Moehammad Natsir himself, agreed, however, that questions of principle and associated matters should not be frozen in the interests of political unity, but implied that discussions could be two-sided and friendly, whereas Isa Anshary's approach often conveyed the impression of an ultimatum.

b. *The Front Anti-Komunis*

In the period from 1953 through the end of the period, the Persatuan Islam was in the forefront in public opposition to the activities and even the presence of the Communist Party in Indonesian politics. In 1953 a national political action committee called the Front Anti-Komunis—FAK (Anti-Communist Front), later known as the Liga Anti-Komunis Rakjat Indonesia—LIKRA (Indonesian Peoples Anti-Communist League) was established by three Masjumi leaders—M. Isa Anshary, Jusuf Wibisono, and Sjarif Usman. It was supposedly organized on lines similar to the Communist cell system, that was to combat communism on all levels of society.[90] Actually it was active in the Muslim sector of society and depended heavily on local Masjumi groups; consequently, was it came to be regarded as a Masjumi front organization by other political groups. While it gathered considerable strength in some areas, such as Jakarta and Surabaya, it never really caught on nationally, perhaps because it was seen as highly dogmatic and somewhat extreme in its demands that communism be totally banned at a time when the general Indonesians population believed that all political views should be included in the political arena. The Front Anti-Komunis was ultimately banned in the succeeding era, sometime after 1958.

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[89] *Haluan* (April 5, 1957).

[90] *Boyd R. Compton*, "Muslim Radicalism: The Anticommunist Front," *AUFS Report* (March 5, 1953); *Suara Masjumi* (December 10, 1954), 3; *Suara Masjumi* (September 1, 1956), 8.

Isa Anshary used the periodical of the Front Anti-Komunis, titled *Anti-Communist*, to undertake a vigorous crusade against the Indonesian Communist Party. In essence, his writings for the anti-communist crusade had less of an Islamic argumentation than protestation of communism's grand design to complete the proletarian revolution and enslave the earth.[91] Still, all his writings during this period had a strong warning to Muslims against ideologies not compatible with Islam. For example, in *The Red Menace in Indonesia* and again in his speech before the Constituent Assembly, he outlined his specific objections to Communism and rejected it as incompatible with Islam and with Indonesian nationalism. Some of his argumentation is outlined in the next chapter.

In March 1954 the Persatuan Islam itself went on public record against communism by issuing a *fatwā*, signed by eleven activists as a joint endeavor. Those members included the leading jurists of the association, namely, A. Hassan, H. Munawar Khalil, E. Abdurrahman and A. Kadir Hassan. This *fatwā* asserted that every Muslim had an obligation to follow Islamic dictates in "personal life, in society and in the state," and that it was forbidden to become a member of a movement which was in conflict with the teachings of Islam. The *fatwā* made it clear that the communist party was the target of its attack and that the Persatuan Islam's position was not merely political in nature, but involved the very definition of religious obligation itself. The communists were regarded as implacably opposed to Islam, and the signers of the *fatwā* went on record as stating that communism and Islam were totally incompatible and that no cooperation was possible. The gist of this message was not in any sense a watershed as Persis opposition had been apparent earlier, but this use of a religious *fatwā* by Muslim jurists attempted to give religious sanction to the anti-communist effort and was acceptable to many Indonesian Muslims.[92]

c. *Relationships with the Insurgent Darul Islam*

Persatuan Islam activists seem to have been sympathetic to the general goals of the Darul Islam (Islamic State Movement) and sometimes expressed concern about having a group outside the law which

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[91] *Daulah Islamyah*, I, 12 (December 1957), 34–36.
[92] Compton, "*Muslim*," 8; Indonesia, *Dasar*, II, 285–288.

they believed should have been included in the legal political arena. Throughout the early 1950's, when elections were stalled for various political reasons, Isa Anshary remarked on several occasions that the delays were disappointing to the Muslims and made many Muslims wonder if the Darul Islam was not correct in its contention that the nationalists would never permit an Islamic state to be established in Indonesia.[93] Similar utterances were also apparently made by Ahmad Hassan. Such statements may have been the reason for their arrest in August 1951 when the Sukiman government conducted a general razzia against the Communists and against Muslims believed to be conspiring with the Darul Islam. Ahmad Hassan and Isa Anshary were released within three days of their arrest and charges against them were never substantiated.[94] This did not change the viewpoint of Isa Anshary, who continued to see the problem of the Darul Islam, not as a security problem, as the nationalist governments of the time did, but rather as an unresolved political problem of a Muslim group existing outside of legal activity. As late as the Constituent Assembly hearings in 1956, he contended that the adoption of Islam as the state philosophy would satisfy rebel demands, and that the fighting, which had no prospect of ending as long as Indonesia was a secular state, could then be halted.[95]

There may have been some contacts between the Darul Islam and Persis members from time to time throughout the Constitutional Period, but it is highly unlikely that the Persatuan Islam, committed as it was to achieving its goals through peaceful means and having considerable reason prior to 1956 for believing that peaceful means could be successful, actually aided the Darul Islam. Contact with the Darul Islam, if it occurred, would have been a means of keeping lines of communication open, with an eye toward promoting eventual rebel reconciliation with the government. Even such contact must have been exceedingly limited. In 1949 Moehammad Natsir led a Muslim sponsored education program in territory controlled by the Darul Islam[96] and there may have been later attempts

[93] *Ibid.*, 205–206.
[94] Indonesian Parliament, *Risalah Perundingan* XIV (1951), 7142.
[95] Indonesia, *Dasar*, II, 205.
[96] George McT. Kahin, "Indonesian Politics and Nationalism," in *Asian Nationalism and the West*, ed. by William L. Holland (New York, 1953), 109.

by Persis members to contact the Darul Islam for similar activity. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that Persis efforts ever extended beyond this exploratory stage.

7. Emphasis on Jurisprudence (Fiqh)

The Bangil branch was first to renew the pre-Independence stress on publication of *fatāwā* given in answer to the requests of the general Muslim. The magazine *The Muslims* began publication in 1954 to serve as a conduit for such *fatāwā* and its success can be measured by its longevity, since it is still in existence in 2000 over 45 years later, despite a hiatus in the Guided Democracy era of the early 1960s. *The Muslims* stressed the relatively new form of Muslim jurisprudence, based on modernist Muslim sources that had been pioneered by Ahmad Hassan and his colleagues during the late colonial period. But the magazine went considerably beyond the "question-answer" sections that had earlier appeared in the *Islamic Defender*, although the heart of the magazine was still the *fatāwā* themselves. But alongside the *fatāwā* other material of relevance to the study of Muslim jurisprudence was included, particularly articles on sources of jurisprudence, use of the *Ḥadīth, Qur'ānic* commentary and biographies of the Companions of the Prophet. Here can be seen a decided compromise of modernist Muslim principles with those of traditionalist Islam in that the sources of modernism—*Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*—are used, along with the methodology and conceptual constructs developed by traditionalists in the original construction of Islamic jurisprudence. It constituted a distinct recognition that the classical and medieval traditions of Muslim scholarship in jurisprudence were not to be shoved aside as had originally seemed the case when modernist Islam first appeared. Combined with the practice of always consulting the *fatāwā* of earlier traditionalist scholars to gain insight and context, the writers for *The Muslims* showed considerable movement toward the traditionalist position, even if that movement was not fully recognized by the Indonesian traditionalists of the time.

The willingness to accept the Islamic past in no way turned the contributors to *The Muslims* toward reconstruction of the past. The editorials were always focused on the Persis concerns with its principle opponents: secularism, communism and atheism. The *fatāwā* were likewise contemporary in addressing issues. A simple analysis of slightly over 300 *fatāwā* appearing between 1955 and 1957 shows

that about 50 were concerned with religious belief, nearly one-half were concerned about religious obligation and practice, and slightly over one-third dealt with social and political matters. Cases of religious belief consisted of matters of general information, questions of proper investigation into religious sources, application of belief to the Indonesian context, and compatibility of religious tenets to scientific and technological developments of the current age. The cases of religious obligation and practice dealt with ritual cleanliness, death and funerals, the poor tax, proper observance of prayer, fasting, and the pilgrimage to Mecca. The cases on social and political matters dealt with marriage and divorce, dietary issues, status of men and women, tolerance of non-Muslims, national law, and the national state.[97]

The Muslims gave the Bangil scholars led by Ahmad Hassan and Abdul Kadir Hassan an effective vehicle for disseminating their *fatāwā* and they used it to good advantage in the mid-1950s. However, the stress on developing the religious persona by application of rules and principles derived from a study of religious sources was by no means confined to Bangil; the entire membership of the Persatuan Islam was committed to religious piety and, indeed, the tendency went beyond into a large segment of the Indonesian Muslim community of Indonesia. Other Persis scholars were important in the development of the genre, most notably Abdullah Ahmad at Bandung and Hadji Munawar Khalil at Semarang.

8. *The End of Persis Political Activity*

In 1957, the Persatuan Islam issued a rebuke to President Sukarno in a resolution sent to all Persis activists entitled "The Persatuan Islam rejects Sukarno's 'concept'." The Persis resolution rejected Sukarno's plan to assume emergency powers and give the country direction instead of allowing parliament to undertake that task. It asked the President to reconsider and called upon all non-communists to close ranks and combat the "anti-God and anti-religious basis which is communism and atheism" as a means of handling the national crisis that had prompted Sukarno's actions.[98] Later, in 1960, the Persatuan Islam issued a new call for action in another manifesto, but by that

[97] Howard M. Federspiel, "Social and Political Language of Indonesian Muslims: The Case of *Al-Muslimun*," *Indonesia* 38 (October 1984), 61.

[98] *Suara Masjumi*, March 15, 1957, 8.

time Masjumi defections to the Outer Islands cause and the change-over of the system to the authoritarian system of Guided Democracy made Persis pronouncements unimportant and incapable of arousing any widespread support in the population, let alone among the important power brokers of the emerging era.[99] The arrest of its chair, M. Isa Anshary in 1962, indicated to the remaining leadership that even this level of political statement would not be countenanced. The Persatuan Islam, like every other Muslim organization, had to decide how to continue its mission in the midst of change. It did so by retreating from politics and concentrating on its efforts to instill Muslim values in the population in a non-political way, that is, through publications on technical religious obligations and on informational sessions that eschewed an openly political agenda.

[99] *Harian Abadi* (September 7, 1960), 1–2.

CHAPTER SIX

PERSATUAN ISLAM BELIEFS AND THEIR APPLICATION IN INDEPENDENT INDONESIAN SOCIETY

The belief pattern of the Persatuan Islam was described in the discussion of the late colonial period; thinking regarding basic beliefs did not change. Modernist Muslim principles prevailed, reform of religious thought remained important, and the extension of Islamic principles to all parts of human life remained paramount. Consequently, in this chapter those basic principles will not be re-described, but only dealt with as they have some impact on the problems confronting the Persatuan Islam in the period under discussion. Some of those problems were continuing issues, as in the case of political matters, and some were fresh concerns as in the case of modern sociological and technological developments. Alongside these concerns was the effort of the Persis's jurists to make Islamic principles clearer to believers through *fatāwā*, and the product of those *fatāwā* began to describe a modernist Islamic jurisprudence. In fact the chapter is divided between those three themes. The first deals with Persis arguments in the political arena, tracking beliefs regarding the fundamental nature of Indonesian politics, followed by considerations in the relationships with nationalists, communists, traditionalist Muslims and Christians. The second part discusses *fatāwā* that seem to combine toward creating modernist jurisprudence. Finally, the third part deals with contemporary sociological and technological concerns and how Persis jurists regarded such matters as science, medical practice, economics, severe laws of punishment and the role of women in society.

A. *Islam as Ideology: Persis Arguments in Defense of Muslim Politics*

1. *Assumptions about the Contemporary Indonesian Political System*

Throughout the period under discussion the Persatuan Islam, like other movements in Indonesia, gave a great deal of attention to the future form of government that would evolve in Indonesia and whether it would ultimately assume an Islamic character. Persis writ-

ers and jurists identified with the Indonesian state that had emerged during the Revolution and they accepted its existence as a very positive historical reality. After all, it was the personification of the independence for which they had worked so long against the Dutch and Japanese. In his speech at the Constituent Assembly in 1956, for example, Isa Anshary could invoke National Heroes Day, November 10th, and tie his own speech to that patriotic event. Later in his address he would devote some time to the proclamation of Indonesian independence and its meaning to Indonesians as an point of departure for his own assessment of Indonesian national direction. Still later in the speech he used the phrase "from Sabang to Merauke, from Anjer to Banguwangi," the popular phrase expressing the boundaries of Indonesian territory.[1] The shape and form of the government that emerged from the relatively new Indonesian state was also well known to Persis activists and they used the offices and structure of that government as points of reference in their own writings. Consequently, they referred to a head of state, to state officials, and to people's representatives, apparently because their readers were familiar with those terms. The *fatāwā* and writings of Persis activists did not much challenge the existing political institutions and, indeed, there appears to have been a positive acceptance of them because they were so much a part of the new national scene, identified as their own and as replacements for institutions that had been foreign, whether from the Dutch or the Japanese.

At the same time there was disappointment that the Indonesian state had been brought into existence primarily by the nationalists, who had been the primary competitors of the Muslim political activists during the late colonial period. While Muslims had been allowed to participate, and indeed had been in government coalition with them throughout the revolutionary and early liberal democracy periods, most Muslim political groups saw this cooperation as a temporary accommodation, which would no longer be necessary when Muslim parties would assert their true political strength in the electorate and gain clear, even overwhelming, control of the government. Moreover, there was an understanding by all political participants that the constitution of 1950, the unitary system of government, the structure of governance and just about everything in the political system

[1] Indonesia, *Dasar*, II, 177, 182–183, 203.

was subject to alteration as soon as a constituent assembly was formed with the power to formulate and establish a permanent system of government. Elections would decide this matter and Muslims were confident that they could then make any changes they wished, and that they would use the opportunity to give the Indonesian state and society a clear Islamic identification. Within this perspective the 1956 Persis manifesto would speak about the functioning of an Islamic Republic and the implementation of Islamic law as matters the Muslims would assure as a result of their control, but still made reference to legislatures and executives, to elections and political choice, and to rights even as the system operating under the 1950 Constitution did. The Persis manifesto made clear that Muslim control would mean that a fully democratic state would function and explicitly rejected the existence of an Islamic state based on authoritarianism or police control.[2]

a. *The Mission of the Prophet as an Exemplar*

The Persis perception of a political system began with a statement of the Prophet communities at Makkah and Madinah, which were portrayed as offering a lesson to contemporary Muslims on what is important in the erection and functioning of an Islamic state. The 1956 Manifesto asserted that the struggle of Muḥammad against the forces of conservatism, sin, and ignorance was not different than the conditions of contemporary times and both ages could properly be given the title of "Age of Ignorance." Conditions in the earlier period were particularly dire with non-religious values and practices in force, without the operation of any real moral compass. The Prophet stepped into this situation with the inspiration of God and led a spiritual revolution that introduced clear Islamic belief and standards that transformed the society of the times. That revolution had two parts to it, epitomized by the Prophet's mission at Makkah and his rule at Madinah. In the Makkan period, some 13 years long, the work concentrated on dissemination of information and propagation of the message of God, with the result that many people were freed from a system perpetuating sin for a new relationship with God, who was seen as All-Powerful and Perfect. However, this period was marked as well by many trials and severe tribulations, with considerable dis-

[2] Persatuan Islam, *Manifes*, 47–49.

crimination, and even terror, used by enemies against the Prophet and his early followers. But the dedication of the Prophet to God's cause always prevailed, but ultimately God commanded Muḥammad to flee to Madinah. The Flight to Makkah was not undertaken because of the fear for the Muslim community or the safety of the Prophet, but rather so that conditions would be created at a strategic place for the fulfillment of the mission of the Prophet. However, before the Flight another set of events took place that was to transform the Prophet and the community, that being the Night Journey (*Isrā*) and the Ascension (*Mi'rāj*). These interrelated occurrences, beyond the ability of humans to accept rationally, tested and ultimately fortified the faith and belief of the members of the community and gave them the strength necessary to continue in the struggle to establish Islam.[3]

The Madinah period, ten years in length, was different from the earlier time in Makkah, in that Muḥammad was no longer the propagandist and teacher as he had been, but rather the leader, commander and the administrator. Immediately upon arrival in Madinah a plan was initiated for the new effort which had three major themes implicit in it. First was the erection of a mosque, which established that the good community would be based solidly on the principle of worship and that the community itself would see the place of worship at the center of all human activity. The second theme was the establishment of a close-knit community of believers. This community, with the fear of God and awareness of the Unity of God as fundamental characteristics, was charged to exhibit close cooperation in its social and economic manifestations. It became the basis for a sovereign political entity based on Islamic law. Long before the French Revolution popularized the slogan of *liberté, egalité, fraternité*, the Muslim community at Madinah made the slogan reality; they called it "the good community." The third theme was the foundation of an Islamic state. Implicit in the proclamation of this system was the principle of freedom of speech and thought for all its members, as well as freedom of worship and religion for all members in the state who were not Muslims. The state was based on the laws of God and his Prophet as given through revelation of the *Qur'ān* and the example of the Prophet in his actions. There was

[3] *Ibid.*, 9–13.

an attempt to bring prosperity to the wide community and to maintain peace with other communities outside the state. The accomplishment of this program fulfilled the missionary work undertaken initially in Makkah, and later it was used by the first four caliphs who followed the Prophet in ruling the state and throughout that era served the Muslim community very well. Thereafter, however, unwise experimentation occurred and the community lost its strength and way. Still the early blueprint remains and it can be used by contemporary Muslims to reconstitute a system that would usher in the sort of political and social system that is the will of God.[4]

b. *Origins of the State and its Meaning in Contemporary Indonesia*

History was also of use to Persis writers in dealing with the fundamental concept of "state" that became so important in the discussions on national direction that took place throughout the 1950s. For example, Ahmad Hassan once responded to a remark made by Sukarno to the effect that the concept of "state" had never been known in Islamic civilization, obviously speaking of the characteristic of family rule and multi-ethnic and racial territories that constituted much of Islamic history, which differed so much from twentieth century perceptions of the term. Hassan disputed this contention by referring first to the *Qur'ān*, where he noted that the terms "the abode of the Muslims" and "abode of war" were juxtaposed to designate the places where Muslims and their enemies lived; this he saw as a device to show distinction in political systems. He referred then to later Islamic history when the term "authority" was used to designate rule by important families and factions, such as the ʿAbbāsids, the Fāṭimids and the Ottomans. Eventually this became interchangeable with "sultanate." Still later the terms for "kingdom" and "republic" came into usage, as well as several other terms. Hassan asserted that the conception behind these various terms dealt with territory and population and could be termed "state." After all "state" was a European concept, and was not even found in the Bible, where the operative term was usually "kingdom." Also, he maintained, the word "state" was not found in Malay and Indonesian either, yet the concept still existed in contemporary Indonesia. He then asked the rhetorical question of whether the Prophet ruled a "state" when he was

[4] *Ibid.*, 13–17.

at Madinah, whether the righteous caliphs ruled a "state," and whether the Islamic empire that lasted six centuries and attained a high civilization was a "state" as well. He concluded that by common standards that they were all states and that Islam furnished good examples for any contemporary political system to build on.[5]

Persis writers were clear about their understanding of just what constituted an "Islamic state." First, they asserted that Islam was to be the basis of the state so that God's commands as found in the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* could be followed carefully; all other matters were left to human decision. The usual distinction was made that in such "earthly" matters humans were free to undertake any activities and establish any institutions that were not specifically forbidden by God. An understanding of Islamic codes of ethics and morality would, of course, act as a guide in operation of the political system. Second, Persis writers, drawing clearly on contemporary practice, stated that a head of state with limited powers should be chosen, state officers, responsible to the head of state, should exist, and representatives of the people should meet and make decisions about non-sacred matters and give advice to the head of state. On these points religious principles were not involved at all, so human thinking about organization, benefit and efficiency could all be considered. Third, the decision about the final form of the state was a matter for popular representatives to decide and Persatuan Islam theorists recognized that method of choosing as proper. Again, on this point religion was not much of a factor, even if the popular representatives were to acknowledge their Islamic identity and obligations in deciding for an Islamic government. The fourth point, ancillary to the previous consideration, stated that it was the obligation of all Muslims to take part in voting since the stakes were so high for the future of Islam in the country and, accordingly, not to do so constituted sin.[6] This line of discussion was at odds with most other writings of Persis activists since the 1920s which repeatedly stated that the form of government had to be Islamic in nature, but it may be that the author here meant that recognizing the commands of God was essential in an Islamic state, while allowing humans to decide the other matters regarding the form and direction of government.

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[5] *Pembela Islam* (New Series, 3, May 1956), 10–11.
[6] *Pembela Islam* (New Series, 1, March 1956), 14–15.

Variations of these four points were discussed throughout the period, but most specifically in the *Islamic Defender*, which appeared for a short run in 1956. In one discussion put forward by Ahmad Hassan, a comparison of heads of state in different systems was made. He stated that an Islamic head of state differed substantially from those in other forms of government since he did not have his office as a result of heredity as in a kingdom, he did not rule according to laws made by humans as in a republic, and he could not do whatever he wished as in the case of a dictatorship. Rather, he was chosen (presumably by representatives of the people) for his dedication to religious teachings and carried out his mandate in two distinct ways. First he enforced the religious principles found in *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* since these are ccommanded by God and must be obeyed as a matter of course. Second, he listened to the voice of the people, that is, to representatives elected to serve in an assembly to make the laws in areas left by God for human endeavor. Ahmad Hassan pointedly stated that a head of state could be removed if he did not fulfill his responsibilities or did grievous wrong,[7] which is somewhat at odds with most books of Muslim jurisprudence where the ruler is seen as an agent of God and to move against him is not countenanced.[8] The statement is, however, consistent with modernist Muslim thinking utilizing *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* as its sources for consideration of religious principles, while taking concepts of political power and popular representation from ideals contemporary to the time.[9]

Another Persis jurist of the period, Abdullah Ahmad, took up the issue of popular elections and viewed them in light of the Islamic past. His *fatwā* noted that elections by representatives of the people had been used in the period of the Righteous Caliphs for the selection of the leader of the Islamic community. He regarded this as fitting and implied that the earlier Muslim action justified the contemporary Indonesian practice of choosing a leader in this manner. Still, he noted that there was a striking difference between the period of the Righteous Caliphs and contemporary Indonesia. The Righteous

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[7] *Ibid.*, 21–22.

[8] H.A.R. Gibb, "Constitutional Organization;" in *Law in the Middle East*, ed. by Majid Khadduri and Herbert J. Liebesny (Washington, D.C., 1955), I, 3–27; Denny, *Introduction*, 233.

[9] G.H. Jansen, *Militant Islam* (New York, 1979), 172–187; Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London and New York, 1993), 37.

Caliphs had a political system in place and, consequently, had only to chose a leader, while Indonesian representatives were called on to lay down the very basis for a new political system. He concluded that the issue of the final form of the Indonesian state had been given over to representatives of the people, a move he favored, and he concluded his *fatwā* with the observation that the assignment of responsibility was a solemn commitment.[10] In another *fatwā*, the same jurist remarked that the issue of final state formation in Indonesia was under considerable debate and there were many ideas on what the outcome should be, so much so that the concept of an Islamic state was not altogether assured. Consequently,—repeating Ahmad Hassan's admonition above—all members of the Muslim community were obliged to go to the polls and vote so that the concept would be supported; not to do so constituted a sin.[11] Here can be seen less the acceptance of a system than a general allegiance to one that needs some perfecting, but which offers its members the opportunity to resolve their differences in a fashion regarded as generally fair. Accordingly, it is plain that democratic practice was not regarded as a command of God, but rather a practice that had been used in historic Islam on occasion and was suitable for contemporary use, especially since Indonesians themselves were committed to it at the time.

Further, there was an acceptance of the contemporary political system where parties and factions competed and cooperated with one another for political ends. In a *fatwā* by Ahmad Hassan, the matter of political alliances was addressed, particularly in regard to cooperation between the Masjumi and members of the Socialist Party, who were often close to one another in political action. The answer to whether such cooperation was appropriate in Islam was addressed with the retort that cooperation with any other group was permissible for Muslims, but that the end goal of the Muslims must always be the same, namely that an Islamic state should be achieved for the Indonesian Muslim community. The *fatwā* stated that care had to be taken in such cooperation that good partners be chosen and that groups which had the intention of destroying Islam should be avoided. Here communists were branded as political enemies, with the warning that cooperation with them was clearly not in the interests of Muslims.[12] This perception stands somewhat at odds with the

[10] *Pembela Islam* (New Series, 2, April 1956), 26–27.
[11] *Ibid.*, 25.
[12] *Ibid.*, 32.

Manifesto of 1956 in regard to cooperating with non-Muslim political factions, where such cooperation was seen as dangerous to Muslim unity since those alliances pulled Muslim factions off into policies opposing one another, when their overriding concern should have been cooperation for the sake of achieving the Islamic state.[13] On the same tact, other *fatāwā* raised some questions about the dangers of accepting other ideas and concepts espoused by non-Muslim groups that could be suspect. A *fatwā* of Ahmad Hassan addressed this issue in reference to whether a person could be a communist and a believer in the class struggle as defined by the nineteenth century socialist writers Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and also follow the practices of a committed Muslim. Ahmad Hassan denied that this was possible, stating that other ideologies were to be avoided by Muslims since Islam provided them with a definition for the proper religious purpose. One must not be confused and indeed, being a communist and a Muslim made about as much sense as being a communist who favored capitalism.[14]

2. *Continued Quarrel with the Nationalists*

As they had in the late colonial period, Persis activists continued to issue polemic against the views of the nationalists, even though the standard bearer of the nationalists, the Partai Nasional Indonesia, was a coalition partner of Masjumi in the earlier part of the era. Isa Anshary's "revolutionary-radical" arguments are most expressive of the Persis stance during this time frame, although there were certainly some who followed the more accommodating approach fashioned by Moehammad Natsir as leader of Masjumi. The "revolutionary-radicals" pointed out that Muslims were permitted by their religion "to treasure race and land" and that Indonesian Muslims held just as high a regard for Indonesia as did the nationalists. In his speech at the Constituent Assembly Isa Anshary suggested that the nationalist views of the independence struggle were not accurate as they did not see the driving force of Islam in the effort. He pointed, in particular, to the efforts of Islamic heroes who had forcefully opposed the Dutch: Diponegoro, Imam Bondjol, Teungku Tjhik Ditiro, Maulana Hasanuddin and Sultan Babullah.[15] He asserted that

[13] Persatuan Islam, *Manifes*, 54–55.
[14] *Pembela Islam* (New Series, 2, April 1956), 33.
[15] Diponegoro (d. 1855) opposed the Dutch in Java in the early nineteenth cen-

these heroes undertook their actions to resist and expel the Dutch, not out of a commitment to nationalism, but because of the inspiration of religion and their commitment to that faith. The situation was not fundamentally different during the Revolution itself, when the spirit that drove the fighters was more than a commitment to the territory of Indonesia. The spirit went deeper and rested on an idealism and a sense of sacrifice that traced itself to God Himself. Consequently it was a religious spirit that made the Revolution possible, not simply the love of country as President Sukarno maintained.[16]

The recognition that Indonesia was a nation and was a worthwhile creation was a considerable concession to the nationalist position that the Persis activists had been unable to accept during the late colonial period; so there was some movement on this issue by the Persatuan Islam. Isa Anshary even suggested that Muslims and nationalists were united in some ways. He stated, for example, that Islam commanded Muslims to demonstrate their support of the land in which they lived by actions, "with exertion, with struggle and sacrifice," in the same way that nationalists did. He stated that the nationalists and Muslims had the same outlook "toward social justice, prosperity of society and national security," but that the two groups differed on the exact approach needed to achieve such goals.[17] The point at which Muslims and nationalists parted, stated Isa Anshary, was on the type of law that was to be operative in the Indonesian state. Like Ahmad Hassan in the late colonial perioid, Isa Anshary argued that Muslim law had to be made operative and that Muslims were opposed to any movement which rejected religious law and advocated human-made legal standards for Indonesia.

The "revolutionary-radical" group believed that the struggle for independence would not be complete and the revolution would not be ended until some sort of Muslim control over the state was established. In *Islamic Revolution*, for example, Isa Anshary stated that the "Islamic revolution" was not a national revolution, limited to national

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tury; Imam Bondjol (d. 1837) led a revolution in West Sumatra which ultimately involved the Dutch in the second quarter of the nineteenth century; Teungku Tjhik Ditiro (d. 1890) led the Acehnese against Dutch forces late in the nineteenth century; Maulana Hasanuddin (d. 1669) led Macassarese troops against the Dutch in the mid-seventeenth century; and Sultan Babullah (d. 1583) defended the Moluccas against the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. Indonesia, *Dasar*, II, 181.

[16] *Ibid.*, 181–182.

[17] Anshary, *Islam*, 59–60.

boundaries, but rather, a revolution "to release humans from physical and spiritual exploitation. . . . The theory, character, nature, characteristics and philosophy of this revolution," he maintained, "were determined by God through revelation in the *Sunnah!*" The Indonesian revolution, Isa Anshary exhorted, had stopped before it had completed its task because it had fallen under control of "unbelievers" and hypocrites." He urged that the Indonesian Revolution be continued, but that it be given spiritual content to achieve its goal of establishing Islam and its laws in the state and society.[18] This impolitic expression of labeling political competitors with pejorative names was also used in the 1956 Manifesto, showing the degree of animosity that the Persis activists had for the nationalists.

The *Pancasila* (Five Principles of Indonesian Statehood) sponsored as a state philosophy by the nationalist group, also came under attack from the "revolutionary-radical" Muslim group. They held, like most Muslim political activists, that the *Pancasila* were unduly vague and that the practice of allowing each faction to interpret the principles in their own way offered no real means of building consensus on a state philosophy. In *The Islamic Community faces the General Elections* Isa Anshary charged that the *Pancasila* constituted a vapid ideology with no substance, useful only as a slogan. As an example of vagueness he cited the principle of "democracy," and asked whether such democracy was to be "Western democracy or the democratic centralism of Eastern Europe, and whether it would operate on the principle of majority rule." He rejected both possibilities, calling them imperfect systems, claiming that Islam transcended such simple notions of democracy. Indeed, Islam placed restriction on some actions, such as "submission to the majority," since many matters had already been decided by the *Qur'ān* and were not open to human debate. He noted the same vagueness in the first principle "Belief in God," and suggested that this principle was not the same "belief in God" confessed by Muslims. The belief in God mentioned in the *Pancasila*, he stated, was not concerned with "undertaking good and shunning evil," establishing the sacred law, "establishing the principle of the unity of God in all things and . . . destroying polytheistic tendencies," nor could it be used as a measure by which to resolve all matters and settle all disputes.[19] He stated elsewhere: "We hear people slo-

[18] Anshary, *Revolusi*, 15–16, 12.
[19] Anshary, *Ummat*, 7–8, 18–19.

ganize 'Belief in God' . . . whose actions are contrary to the laws of God; people who propagandize 'humanity,' but whose actions show bestiality; people who sloganize 'social justice,' but work only for their own comfort and satisfaction; people who sloganize 'democracy,' but who promote only the interests of their own parties. The *Pancasila* are used only as a slogan, for agitation and demagoguery, a gadfly of the people. These [five principles] . . . have really become 'no principle at all.'"[20] Isa Anshary's remarks illustrate the great gulf that existed after 1953 between the two leading factions in Indonesian politics, and explain in part the inability of these groups to continue their cooperation in the governments of the young republic.

In the Constituent Assembly Isa Anshary attacked the problem from a different angle by asserting that *Pancasila* should not be confused with the Proclamation of Independence, as it often was in the minds of the public; they were separate statements with different purposes. Both were short, with the Proclamation announcing the important issue of separation of Indonesia from its former Dutch occupiers. The *Pancasila,* on the other hand, was simply a revolutionary slogan designed for the moment, expressing a political sentiment, incorporating the various reasons that all cooperating groups had for participating in the struggle. To Isa Anshary the Jakarta Charter was a more substantive statement, as it put forward the essence of the Muslim community's concerns and the means for fulfilling its political aspirations. Unfortunately, he continued, the charter statement was not officially accepted in toto, although pieces of it were included in both the Constitution of 1945 and the one made in 1949. Importantly, he concluded, there was a tendency by the non-Muslim political parties to overlook the contributions and good will that the Muslim parties demonstrated during and after the Revolution and to attempt to push aside important matters for the Muslim community, for the sole purpose of achieving total political victory. Complete demolition of the Muslim program was the nationalists' goal.[21]

3. *Hostility towards Communism*

The Persatuan Islam was equally adamant in its complete rejection of Communism, and its members issued a large number of books,

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[20] *Ibid.*, 13–14.
[21] Indonesia, *Dasar*, II, 184–187.

manifestos and *fatāwā* that spelled out the basis for that rejection. Undoubtedly this harkened to the first quarter of the twentieth century when communist calls for action had torn apart the Sarekat Islam, failed in their execution, and placed large numbers of other political activists at risk. We have reviewed the statements of Persis writers in that earlier era about the communists, but neither was there was any doubt about their feelings in the Liberal Democracy Era. Persatuan Islam statements issued in 1953, 1954, and 1956, were aimed specifically at condemnation of communism. The 1954 declaration, for example, stated that any Muslim who, having heard the evidence against communism, still followed that ideology, would "be considered an apostate" and would not "receive Muslim prayers or a Muslim burial after death."[22] *Fatāwā* issued by individual Persis jurists presented similar arguments and accurately reflected the arguments and attitudes toward Communism of a large segment of Indonesian Muslims. One particular *fatwā*, appearing in *The Muslims* in 1955, declared that marriage between a Muslim woman and a communist could not be valid.[23] Another *fatwā*, by Ahmad Hassan, condemned the communist united front policy and stated that Muslim cooperation with communists was not permissible, since such cooperation would lead only to destruction of religion.[24] This absolute condemnation, of course, went considerably beyond the reprimands and name calling aimed at the nationalists and the Nahdlatul Ulama activists.

The 1956 manifesto of the Persatuan Islam, coming as it did after the political gains of the communists in the elections of 1955, decried communism in vivid terms. The document stated that the "theory and practice of communism is not only opposed to all religions, but expresses only hatred toward faith as taught by all religions."[25] On the same line of thought, the document remarked that the communists rejected God, revelation and prophets, and that communists mistakenly saw religion only as a "superstition shackling human reason."[26] It noted that the communist rejection of religious belief and absolute values revealed itself in a lack of morality which permitted communists to use terror as a fundamental instrument of control.

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[22] Indonesia, *Dasar*, II, 288; Compton, "Muslim," 8.
[23] *Al-Muslimun*, I, 12 (March 1955), 7–8.
[24] *Pembela Islam* (New Series), I, 2 (April 1956), 32.
[25] *Suara Masjumi* (March 15, 1957), 8.
[26] Anshary, *Bahaja*, 11; Indonesia, *Dasar*, II, 227–228, 229–231.

"The practice of communist governments in lands they control," stated another Persis document, "is to cruelly exterminate religious life, tear down the places of worship, and terrorize religious leaders and religious scholars inhumanely, as was done in Turkestan, Caucasia and Hungary." The document concluded that the communists of Indonesia were no different than communists in other lands, and were guilty of "the slaughter of Muslim leaders" at Madiun in 1948, "when the communist party was in open revolt against the Republic of Indonesia."[27]

Persis documents stated further that the communists were internationalist in orientation and received aid and orders from the Soviet Union to further communist goals. It was maintained that communism's real aim was the introduction of a new kind of colonialism to replace the imperialism of the West, and it was only in order to achieve this goal that the communists masqueraded as a staunchly nationalistic group.[28] The 1956 Persis statement expounded this same argument and stated that Indonesian communist strength in the 1955 elections had been attained through deception and deceit, and warned that "promises from the mouths of communists to the Indonesian masses have no validity and no meaning in communist ideology."[29] The document referred to *Qur'ānic* verses as the basis for a *fatwā* regarding non-believing groups, such as the communists. The documents stated that *Al-'Imrān* 117 recalls that disbelievers—anti-religious and anti-God—are always causing and undertaking destruction of every community that believes properly and follows religion; *al-Mujādilah* 22 contains the explanation that the Islamic community may not cooperate with groups opposed to God and His Prophet; *al-Nisā'* 140 clearly forbids Muslims to remain together with people who reject religious teachings; and *al-Mā'idah* 2 commands Muslims to work together for accomplishment of the respect of God and forbids cooperation for the purpose of committing sin and injustice.[30] In his speech at the Constituent Assembly Isa Anshary covered the entire ground anew, speaking of communists as anti-God, anti-religious, as imposing the law of the jungle, without morals, as devoted to strife, as users of terror, as promoting hell on earth, as anti-democratic and anti-national, as representing a new imperialism and as

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[27] *Suara Masjumi* (March 15, 1957), 1.
[28] Anshary, *Bahaja*, 25, 27; Indonesia, *Dasar*, II, 234.
[29] *Suara Masjumi* (March 15, 1957), 8.
[30] *Ibid.*, 8.

constituting a new religion in itself.[31] In his litany he used examples from the communist movement of Lenin and the Bolshevik state of Stalin as examples and concluded with a long statement of the suppression of Muslim populations in Central Asia by both leaders in their drive to solidify the Soviet Union. He warned that such political aggressiveness was common to communists and that it could be just as easily used in Indonesia.[32]

Finally the *fatāwā* of the Persis jurists also were harsh in their judgment of communism and communists. A *fatwā* in 1954 explained that the term "unbeliever" denoted a person who does not believe in God and the other things that Islam commands to be believed, "such as the existence of Allāh or . . . the justice of Allāh." The *fatwā* noted that there are various kinds of unbelievers. "There are those who do not want to accept or believe, such as Marx, Lenin, Stalin and other communists." A second group, named "hypocrites," hide their disbelief and profess belief. They make a pretense of confessing Islam, but their intention is to confuse Muslims, "as the P.K.I. [Indonesian Communist Party] does." A third type of unbeliever is one who truly knows the truth of Islam, but does not want to recognize it, as some leaders of the P.N.I. (Indonesian National Party] do." The last variety is based on adamant denial, such as Satan himself, who knows of the existence of God but refuses to say so openly. The *fatwā* ends with the admonition that the ultimate fate of all unbelievers is in the fires of hell.[33] The view that some unbelievers, especially communists, are deceitful is further elaborated in a another *fatwā* which deals with the question of whether a person confessing to be Muslim should be taken at his word. The petitioner specifically questioned the validity of a marriage, performed by a Muslim mosque official, wherein the groom was a member of the communist party and the bride was a Muslim In this particular case the mosque official asked the prospective groom to recite the Islamic confession, which he did, and, on that basis of identification with Islam, the official undertook the Islamic marriage ceremony. The response noted that belonging to the communist party and being a Muslim were incompatible, since the communist party was dedicated to principles that were anti-religious and against Islam. Anyone asso-

[31] Indonesia, *Dasar*, II, 221–235.
[32] *Ibid.*, 238–241.
[33] *Al-Muslimun*, 1, 2 (May 1954), 6–7; and 1, 12 (March 1956), 7–8.

ciating with the party aided its disbelief and could be classified an unbeliever. Only by leaving the party could this association be voided, and it is only when this had been done that the former member should be married in a Muslim ceremony. The religious judgment concluded that mosque officials should rigidly question those suspected of belonging to the communist party and perform marriage ceremonies for them only if they have left the party.[34]

4. *Political Polemic Against the Nahdlatul Ulama*

The withdrawal of the Nahdlatul Ulama—NU from Masjumi in 1952 produced an ideological reaction from Persatuan Islam activists. More sensitive to the religious differences of the dispute than to political differences, and long annoyed with the persistence of the NU in emphasizing the importance of the legal schools as the primary source of Muslim doctrine, Persis writers reacted through religious *fatāwā* and other writings in which NU actions were taken to task. In a direct response to an NU statement declaring that one important reason for withdrawal from Masjumi was the failure of Masjumi leadership to recognize the prime importance of the legal schools in religious thinking, Ahmad Hassan stated in *Concerning the Legal Schools*, that Nahdlatul Ulama leaders knew—"and knew quite well,"—when it joined Masjumi in 1945, that many other organizations and persons in Masjumi did not share the NU regard for the legal schools. He pointed out that M. Hasjim Asj'ari, the noted leader who had brought the Nahdlatul Ulama into Masjumi in the first place, had agreed that *fatāwā* would be made by the Legal Council, composed of competent religious scholars, some of whom identified themselves with a legal schools and others who did not.[35] Ahmad Hassan wryly noted that six years was certainly a long time for the Nahdlatul Ulama to be a member of Masjumi if its leadership really could not tolerate Masjumi refusal to accept the legal schools as final authority on religious matters. He suggested that if membership in Masjumi was as reprehensible as stated in resolutions and statements made after NU separation in 1952, then the leaders responsible for bringing the Nahdlatul Ulama into Masjumi were guilty of sin, at the very least.[36] Understanding that the NU's leaders would not denigrate

[34] *Al-Muslimun*, 2, 1 (April 1955), 5–6.
[35] Hassan, *Risalah*, 117.
[36] Hassan, *al-Madz-hab*, 20, 118.

their leader for taking the NU into Masjumi, Ahmad Hassan implied that the *fatwā* to leave Masjumi was not based on a regard for correct religious principles, but was only a political expedient.

In general Ahmad Hassan rejected the Nahdlatul Ulama declaration on the importance of the legal schools made in 1952 and reiterated arguments he had used twenty years earlier in debates with NU leaders to support his position. As in his earlier debates he declared that the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* did not mention the legal schools and that they came into being through historical development with no valid claim to exclusive jurisdiction in matters of determining Muslim belief and behavior. He severely castigated all groups that regarded the legal schools as the final arbiter of religious matters, and he implied that anyone who followed a legal school was wrong and a misinterpreter of religious doctrine. In regard to the political implications of the NU withdrawal from Masjumi, Ahmad Hassan recognized that political cooperation by all Muslims was desirable and possible. He pointed out—correctly—that even after the Nahdlatul Ulama withdrawal, Masjumi still had many traditionalists among its members and that Masjumi attempted to accommodate the religious views of those members as well as those of the modernist Muslims.

The call to unity of all Muslims continued to be a Persatuan Islam slogan throughout the constitutional period. Particularly in the period before the general elections in 1955, Persis leaders tended to deemphasize their dislike of identification with the legal schools, which they realized was a source of contention unlikely to be easily resolved. In a speech at Bandjarmasin in February 1955, for example, Isa Anshary urged political cooperation of all Indonesian Muslims in the approaching elections. He made no reference to legal schools and stated that Muslims were divided only on minor problems, such as the prompting at the grave site and stating intention at the opening of prayer, and that these were not great enough to cause division in the Muslim community.[37] His speech was explicit, however, that there could not be a moratorium on attempts to resolve these differences between modernists and traditionalists, and that he was only asking that both groups cooperate politically while working for the resolution of differences within the Muslim community.

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[37] *Suara Masjumi* (March 1, 1955), 1.

After the general election, however, when it was clear that the political fortunes of the Nahdlatul Ulama had risen, both in terms of number of representatives in parliament and also in its political alliance with the Partai Nationalis Indonesia in the government, Persis reaction was sharper than it had been earlier. Illustrative of this sharpness was a 1956 article in *Islamic Authority (Daulah Islamyah)* by E. Abdurrahman, which lamented the Nahdlatul Ulama refusal to cooperate politically with Masjumi in the post-election era. Abdurrahman centered his complaint against the NU on the term "people of Muḥammad's *Sunnah* and community," (*ahl as-sunnah wa-l jamāʿah*) the traditional slogan of standard Sunnī Islam, which the NU used as a party slogan. Abdurrahman claimed that by using it in its propaganda the NU had "spread slander and calumny, divided the unity of the Islamic community and generated a feud among the Muslims themselves." He maintained that by playing upon the religious implications of the phrase and implying that those Muslims identifying with Masjumi did not belong to the "people of Muḥammad's *Sunnah* and community", the Nahdlatul Ulama sought to slander Masjumi and suggest that Masjumi was outside the pale of Islam. The epithet, he maintained, "is not a guaranty for entering paradise; the name is only a name without any special value . . . [and if it has any value, it] it lies in the behavior, actions, capabilities and energy which fit the title." Abdurrahman then considered the historical origin of the term and stated that it had been assigned by the tenth century theologian al-Ashʿārī to those persons who based their faith on the *Sunnah* rather than on rationalism as their opponents the Muʿtazilī (Rationalists or Free Thinkers) had. Abdurrahman concluded that the term "people of Muḥammad's *Sunnah* and community" should not be applied to any group that followed a legal school since the legal formulations of the legal schools were the product of human reason and did not have the sanction of the *Qurʾan* and the Prophet's *Sunnah.* He restated the Persis stance that Muslims could only make decisions regarding religious matters on the revealed law as found in *Qurʾān* and *Ḥadīth.* He concluded that the Persatuan Islam, and not the Nahdlatul Ulama, belonged to the "people of Muḥammad's *Sunnah* and community", because Persis had always worked against the perpetuation of innovation in religious matters, while confirming correct religious doctrine and behavior.[38]

[38] *Hudjdjatul Islam*, I, 1 (August 1956), 12–20; Persatuan Islam, *Manifes*, 28–35.

5. *Political Attitudes toward Christians*

We have seen that in the late colonial era that Persatuan Islam's writers were highly agitated about Christianity in Indonesia and saw it as a distinct threat to Muslim interests. The views of Ahmad Hassan and others in the Persatuan Islam at that time were hostile and challenging, reflecting in large part general insensitivity of Christian activists to Islam in general. The disappearance of colonial control, with which Christian missionary activity was identified, and the strong role that Christians played in the Revolution itself, gave Muslims a different appreciation of Christians and their important role in the political arena. The Persatuan Islam followed the general lead of Masjumi on the Christian issue, and the 1956 Persis manifesto mentioned that in an Islamic state Christians would be protected and that Muslims would be tolerant of Christian teachings.[39] This, of course, was a standard Muslim declaration in the twentieth century, which equates the best of Muslim historical practice to the contemporary situation. There were also declarations of tolerance and concern about cooperation in the writings and statements of Persis activists in general, whether they were acting as jurists in the issuance of *fatāwā* or as political activists. The marked change demonstrates that Christians were seen differently than they had been fifteen years earlier, then as part of the colonial structure, now as part of the national endeavor.

Fatāwā published in *The Muslims* during the mid-1950's clearly spoke in traditional Sunnī Muslim tones of tolerance for Christians and Jews as "Peoples of the Book" (*ahl al-kitāb*), who were to be recognized as part of society and shown respect. One *fatwā* stated that marriage between a Muslim male and a Jewish or Christian woman was permitted, and it was explicitly stated that conversion of the woman to Islam was not a precondition.[40] The basis for the view was the record of behavior of the Companions of Mohammed, some of whom married Christian and Jewish women during the expansion out of the Arab Peninsula after the death of the Prophet. The record was silent on the matter of Christian men marrying Muslim women. In another *fatwā*, dealing with a Muslim working in a church, the response noted that a Muslim taking part in a worship service of

[39] *Ibid.*, 55.

[40] *Al-Muslimun*, 5 (August 1954), 4; 3, 33 (November–December 1957), 5–6.

the church would be considered an unbeliever, but that general work there was not forbidden. The writer questioned, however, the appropriateness of a Muslim choosing to work in such a situation, even though it was not forbidden.[41] In a *fatwā* with even wider implications, one writer stated that it was acceptable to have business dealings with all non-Muslims, even to undertaking joint ventures. The Muslim's portion of the business would be subject to the Muslim's poor tax (*zakāh*) while the part belonging to the nonbeliever would not.[42]

Isa Anshary, reflecting his "revolutionary-radical" approach, stated in *Islam and Nationalism* that Muslims and Christians were alike in that they both worshiped God, and if each followed the lessons of their respective religions, there was no reason why the followers of the two religions should not live in friendship and without friction. Freedom of religion, he pointed out, was clearly observed in Islamic history and was "more guaranteed and of much wider scope than the 'freedom of religion' observed in several of the great states of Europe" during the same time frame.[43] Like many Muslim writers reflecting on Muslim relations with Christians, Isa Anshary implied that the "religious freedom" that was to be guaranteed religious minorities was to be determined by Muslim standards and interpretation, and that the Christian interpretation would be accepted only if it did not conflict with the Muslim viewpoint in the matter. On a more sour note, however, in his speech in the Constituent Assembly Isa Anshary was less understanding, stating that the Christians were never convinced of the Muslim's sincerity, going so far as to claim that before they would submit to an Islamic state they would cooperate with the communists to oppose its imposition.[44]

Moehammad Natsir's approach accepted Isa Anshary's formulation about guaranteed tolerance, but made an additional effort to overcome Christian fears of Muslim political power. In an article titled "Tolerance among Religions," Natsir maintained that Muslims were commanded to spread the true faith, but in performing this religious obligation, Muslims were "to give summons in a manner free of all force" and under no circumstance were they to attempt to solve the problem of religious difference by resorting to force or

[41] *Al-Muslimun*, 1, 10 (January 1954), 5.
[42] *Al-Muslimun*, 3, 27 (June 1956), 7.
[43] Anshary, *Islam*, 61–62.
[44] Indonesia, *Dasar*, II, 55.

intolerance. Muslims, Natsir argued, were not to be passive in following a policy of religious tolerance, but were to constantly remove irritations among religious groups and to come to the aid of other religions whenever there was a threat. "Whenever freedom of religion is threatened and suppressed, even if Muslim religious rights are not involved, Muslims are obliged to aid the 'people of the book' [and allow them] to worship God according to their various religions, even by pledging their own lives if necessary."[45]

Persis writers certainly expressed a different attitude than earlier in the century, but probably the damage was done. Certainly the Persatuan Islam did not back away from its views on Christianity as expressed in Ahmad Hassan's book on Jesus as a prophet, not the son of God. The book continued to be distributed and sold during the period under consideration. Despite assurances by Natsir and other Indonesian Muslim leaders with good public reputations, Christians saw their religious obligations as best served by a secular state and, consequently, developed both political and religious arguments to support their choice. During the Constituent Assembly debates on the nature of the Indonesian state, the Christian political parties supported *Pancasila* as a state ideology in direct opposition to the Muslim stance on the issue. The radical approach of Isa Anshary, his intolerance of Muslims who seemingly ignored their Islamic responsibilities, and the anti-Christian activities of the outlawed Muslim rebel groups in West Java and the South Celebes made rapport between Muslims and Christians difficult regardless of Muslim assurances of friendship and tolerance. Muslim efforts to join forces with the Christians, however, continued even after the general elections and, occasionally, the Persatuan Islam made unsuccessful appeals for Christians to join with Muslims and form an anti-Communist front.[46]

6. *Some Comparisons*

The efforts of Mawdūdī and his Jamā'at-i-Islāmī in the Pakistan period of Mawdūdī's career are in some regards similar to that of the effort of the Persatuan Islam in that both suddenly existed in new nations that tested the assumptions of their belief patterns. In

[45] *Hikmah*, VII, 6 (February 6, 1954), 6; Natsir, *Capita Selecta*, II, 225–230.
[46] *Harian Abadi* (September 7, 1960), 1.

both cases the stress on Islamic moorings of the state had to incorporate new thinking because their countrymen had founded states based on secular models that they had not entirely anticipated, and Islamic values had to be made relevant to the new situations each found themselves in. Both questioned secular nationalist assumptions about the new states and attempted through political means to bring about the adoption of Islamic law and other ideas they held to be part of an Islamic state. Mawdūdī's writings underlying the formation of an Islamic state are more philosophically sophisticated than those of the Persatuan Islam and they exhibit greater understanding of the nature of political terminology and state building than the Persatuan Islam ever attained. Importantly, while Persis activists used the term *fitrah* on occasion, the concept never took on the central place in Persis political statements that the term did in the writings of Mawdūdī during this time. That term, denoting the nature of humans and the relationship with God's instructions for humans was a leading term in the Pakistani endeavor. On the other hand the references to sacred law and Islamic justice were much the same. Regarding relationships with the traditionalist religious scholars, there were difficulties in both cases for much the same reasons, although the dynamics were different. Their relationships with other political factions—nationalists, traditionalists and sectarian—were marked by the same sort of alienation of the Jamā'at-i-Islāmī as by the Persatuan Islam and for quite similar reasons.[47]

The efforts of Ḥasan al-Bannā' and the Ikhwān al-Muslimun in Egypt were somewhat different than the experience of the Persatuan Islam. Certainly the close of pervasive British influence in Egypt during this period when the control of the Suez Canal came under Egyptian control and the Free Officers rebellion in 1952 brought in a new state that could be viewed as a affirmation of political independence. Politically Ḥasan al-Bannā"s movement had much difficulty with the new governments which espoused secularism, but he himself did not find nationalism at all questionable to his Islamic values, and he was openly involved in nationalist causes and in league with many nationalists as well throughout his career. Equally, Ḥasan al-Bannā' wanted sacred law and other Islamic values put into place

[47] Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York, 1996), 96–99, 110–114.

by the state, and in this sense his movement's goals were similar to those of the Persatuan Islam. But the recruiting goals of the Ikhwān in taking in the wealthy and army officers at important junctures of its action in an effort to increase its influence in overall society and its high political profile gave it a different context than existed with the Persatuan Islam, with the result that its political message was far removed from the problems confronted by the Persatuan Islam. Much the same can be said of the comparison with the writings of Sayyid Quṭb, the ideologue for the Ikhwān after the death of Ḥasan al-Bannā', who laid out a sophisticated elaboration of the role of contemporary Islam to the state and the need for both the sacred law and Islamic justice to function as an essential part of that system. The sophistication of the Quṭb discourse places it in a different realm than the *fatāwā* put forward by the Persatuan Islam's activists. Relationship with communists and other political factions was not much different on the part of the Ikhwān than that of the Persatuan Islam in its context.[48]

B. *Toward a Modernist Jurisprudence*

1. *Efforts toward Building a New Islamic Law*

The content and context of *fatāwā* that produced an orderly and consistent pattern of principles toward a paradigm of modernist jurisprudence can be seen clearly from the following points. The first is found in an *fatwā* written in June 1955 by an anonymous Persis writer who enumerated a list of actions and practices he regarded as unacceptable to good religious practice. "Included in innovation—particularly in the past—were many things, among them were the inclusion in prayer of an unauthorized rite pronouncing intention, prompting the deceased at gravesite with Islamic lessons in preparation of his judgment, reciting unauthorized religious formulas, particularly the expression *Allāhu akbar* (God is Great), at the grave, ignoring ritual washing or making prayers while performing ritual washing for every member of the body, asking pardon for sins by

[48] Ahmad S. Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb* (Beirut, 1992), 147–213; Zohurul Bari, *Re-Emergence of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt* (New Dehli, 1995), 38–49, 58–64; Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (Albany, 1996), 79–88.

reciting the Friday communal prayer after the *salam* prayer, reciting the Ramadan prayers for the deceased, reciting the *dhikr* while attending a funeral, reading the opening *sūrah* of the *Qur'ān* to the deceased, reading *Yā Sīn* and other *sūrāt* while performing general work, using the *Qur'ān* as a shield, adding extra words to formal worship, because none of these practices genuinely belong to Islam."[49] This *fatwā*, of course, reflected the stance of Ahmad Hassan and his fellow writers in the 1930's, who were concerned with the results of their investigation into the traditionalist practices of Indonesian Muslims that they regarded as having no support in religious sources. It shows a strong continuity with past thinking of the Persis scholars, and the concern of the new writers that these issues still needed addressing among Indonesian believers.

A second illustration is obtained from a set of *fatāwā* that define Muslim behavior according to the five-fold category common to Muslim schools of law: i.e., "necessary," "meritorious," "permitted," "reproachful," and "forbidden."[50] Matters of religious performance which are necessary, include prescribed prayer, giving the tithe, and fasting during Ramadan. Likewise some actions, usually in nonreligious matters, are forbidden, such as drinking alcohol and eating pork. A large number of matters are permitted, such as working with a non-Muslim, undertaking business activities, and participating in sports. The category of "meritorious" is more circumscribed, but some actions are listed, such as praying at night. The category of "reproachful" is similarly circumscribed, including only one immediate example when certain categories of meat for human discussion are discussed, such as "wild animals, snakes and tigers."[51] Persis writers admonished their readers that analogy should not be used to make "reproachful" into "forbidden" matters, such as, "one may not eat dog meat because it equates to pork," or making meritorious into "necessary" matters because they seem good, such as extra recitations from popular sections of the *Qur'ān*.[52] Categories exist as God

[49] *Al-Muslimun*, II, 3 (June 1955), 7–8. A number of *fatāwā* from the Bangil group written during the 1950's indicate that Persis thinking on these subjects had not changed from what it had been in the late colonial era. *Al-Muslimun*, II, 7 (October 1955), 9; *Al-Muslimun*, V, 43 (November 1960), 8–9; *Al-Muslimun*, II, 1 (April 1955), 11; *Al-Muslimun*, VI, 25 (April 1956), 7 *Al-Muslimun*, II, 4 (June 1955), 10–11; *Al-Muslimun*, II, 2 (June 1955), 5–6; *Al-Muslimun*, III, 30 (August 1957), 10–11.

[50] *Al-Muslimun*, I, 10 (January 1954), 7–8.

[51] *Ibid.*, 6–7.

[52] *Al-Muslimun*, II, 2 (May 1955), 4.

sets them, not as humans would like to have them. This methodology for considering most cases of human action was intended to be pervasive, so that the believer would spend much time considering whether personal actions are truly in accordance with religious prescriptions and conscientious concern for correct behavior.

A third example draws on a case that deals with the behavior of Muslims beyond worship and personal behavior in wider society. The writer warned Muslims to be on their guard so that they did not depart from their religious obligations for other enticements or even other obligations, such as a momentary feeling, psychological justification, conformity with custom, political position, circumstance or situation, or family obligations. The *fatwā* concluded with some direct warnings about the plight of the Muslim community in Indonesia and offered advice on what Muslims must and could not do. Pointedly the writer stated that it is difficult to find the means for influencing the public so that religion is respected, especially in a country like Indonesia where Islam is not a popular religion, a situation made worse by the antireligious efforts of those who want to divide the unity of Islam. "But, if among us, the majority want to persuade people to accept Islam so that it has no rivals, want to preach everywhere, want to teach the genuine picture of religion, want to increase the number of religious books in circulation, [and want] to educate people. . . .," then they will make an impression on the general populace. But, if on the other hand, Muslims remain ignorant and adopt passive attitudes, then the greatness of the Islamic community will be lost."[53] So, here again the pervasiveness of religious feeling by the believer was to give direction to life, so that the individual would see first his pious Muslim obligations to make society reflect the Persis *weltanschauung.*

Lacking in these *fatāwā* was any full discussion of the social problems presented by the technological advances and sociological developments of the previous century, and the impact of these trends on the religious life of Indonesian Muslims. The *fatāwā* in *The Muslims* and elsewhere sometimes dealt with the individual problems of the modern age, such as the efforts to change the status of women in society, the use of the poor tax for public projects, the problem of interest and banks, and, only rarely, *fatāwā* on modern health and

[53] *Al-Muslimun*, I, 10 (January 1954), 8.

hygiene, and then only on birth control and blood transfusion. Even these discussions were kept within a tight religious framework which offered answers for almost all situations in the society, rather than discussion in the context of a world affected by technological advances and sociological developments where the society itself was being transformed, even in the non-industrial areas of the world, including Indonesia. This set of limited *fatāwā* do, however, constitute a sizeable enough body of literature that they are discussed below in a special section of this chapter.

Finally, there were appropriate limits set on the use of religious *fatāwā*, and writers apparently recognized a distinction between political thinking and jurisprudence. As already noted, some *fatāwā* were made on matters that deal with politics, such as support for nationalism, which was seen as anti-religious, and the atheism of the communists was reviled. It should be remembered, however, that Persis *fatāwā* only rarely criticized actual government policies; as in the Dutch period, "political" opinions were confined to pronouncements concerning the general content of nationalism, the philosophic basis of a national state, and condemnation of political trends opposed to Muslim political goals. Apparently Persis writers believed this to be in the bailiwick of the political units of the organization, which issued manifestos about such matters. There were notable exceptions to this generalization: in 1957, when the Persatuan Islam denounced Sukarno's "conception" for introducing a united front government with communist participation, the action that effectively ended the era of Liberal Democracy.[54] Strikingly, the Persatuan Islam as an organization issued the decision—in contrast to the usual practice of a *fatwā* by an individual scholar—perhaps because the organization, facing the end of political activity in a free political environment, used its best weapon, the persuasive power of the religious scholar's voice. Unfortunately it had no real effect on the outcome of the situation.

2. *Some Comparisons*

The efforts of the Persatuan Islam in building a new type of Islamic law was not different in intent than can be seen in the writings of Mawdūdī and Quṭb, for both of those writers laid out their objections to the formation of classical jurisprudence and called for a new

[54] *Suara Masjumi* (March 15, 1957), 8.

formulation. Neither of these writers was so adamant against the old jurisprudence as were Persis activists, and they were fairly understanding about those in society who earnestly attempted to live pious lives in accordance with the principles and behavior described in the old codes. However, neither saw those codes as able to provide the modern interpretation so essential to the revitalization of the new Islamic states and societies that were then emerging. Like the Persatuan Islam, they wanted reconstruction, but they each went about it in different ways. Mawdūdī laid great stress on worship and active religion as fundamentals in his system, which gave considerable stress to the obligations of human action, so much of what was in the old codes was re-energized in the new religious and social action programs. Quṭb was similar to Mawdūdī in that he saw the principles of Islamic sacred law as dynamic in society and being able to be applied to contemporary conditions with the formulation of rules and regulations that would fit the moment without compromise to the principles themselves. But neither Mawdūdī nor Quṭb spent any great amount of time on dealing with those rules and regulations as the activists in the Persatuan Islam did; in this respect the Persatuan Islam was different.[55]

C. *Considerations concerning Scientific, Economic and Sociological Trends*

The Persatuan Islam at this period in history was certainly concerned with the impact of the Twentieth Century, with its technological, scientific and sociological developments concerning Muslims and Islamic principles. Basically, Persis members accepted these contemporary developments as beneficial to humankind, but maintained that their true value could only be guaranteed when given guidance by the spiritual and moral values of Islam. In the period under discussion, however, there was no article, *fatwā* or book by a Persis member addressing this issue as such, but several Persis writers treated the subject incidentally in their consideration of related subjects. For instance, in a *fatwā* with the provocative title "Heaven does not exist," a Persis writer stated that "there is no contradiction between belief in science and . . . religious belief," and concluded that a Muslim was free to study science without fear of being branded an apos-

[55] Nasr, *Mawdudi*, 90–91, 96–99; Abu-Rabi, *Intellectual*, 196–198.

tate.[56] Ahmad Hassan, writing in *Is Muhammad a True Prophet?*, cited references in the *Qur'ān* to cross-pollination, to viruses and bacteria and to the astronomical revolution of heavenly bodies as proof that Islam historically has been compatible with science.[57] Another Persis writer admitted that science had changed Muslims' thinking on some subjects, and cited the concept of "heaven" as an example. He noted that Muslims once believed that heaven occupied the space immediately above the earth and was perceptible to the five senses, but conceded that science had shown that heaven did not exist in that form or place. The writer concluded that heaven certainly existed in another place and another form and insisted that heaven as such was not contrary to scientific thinking.[58]

While Persis writers regarded science as beneficial to humankind and acceptable to Islam, they were somewhat more reserved on the influence that science, through technology, with accompanying modifications of society, had produced in the West. They stated that Muslims could accept science, and even technology, but warned Muslims that to follow the example of the West in the way it made use of these benefits was to invite disaster. Persis writers maintained that technology in the West had not been tied to a system of values, had been disruptive of morality, and threatened the very destruction of Western civilization. "Man climbs the tower of technical development," stated Isa Anshary, ". . . but intellect, reason and thought alone are not capable of providing guidance for . . . life."[59] In the same vein, Moehammad Natsir, in a speech in the Constituent Assembly, noted that Western secularists "claim that knowledge must be separated from the values of life and culture." He admitted that the separation was useful in so far as objectivity was concerned, but stated his belief that science had unfortunately become "science for the sake of science" and the scientists felt no responsibility when their creation was used in a destructive manner.[60] Both writers concluded that the spiritual side of man, properly informed of religious commands and prohibitions, was necessary to give technical advances proper utilization and direction.

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[56] *Al-Muslimun*, II, 5 (August 1955), 5.
[57] Hassan, *Muhammad?*, 53; *Al-Muslimun*, II, No. 4 (July 1955), 5–6.
[58] *Al-Muslimun*, II, 5 (August 1955), 5.
[59] Anshary, *Revolusi*, 24.
[60] Indonesia, *Dasar*, I, 17; Moehammad Natsir, *Islam sebagai Ideologie* (Jakarta, 1958).

In *Islamic Revolution*, Isa Anshary lamented the appearance of an attitude among Indonesians that copied the non-spiritual outlook of the West. He warned Indonesians that by imitating the West and disregarding religion as a guide for life, they were taking the same path to destruction that the West was already following. He saw this reflected in the attitude of Indonesian youth who seemed "sophisticated," yet restless. "Parents are no longer able to control their children, because the children feel more developed, more internationally minded." This attitude could also be seen among women, he maintained, where it was clear in the mode of dress for Muslim women. Even some religious scholars' wives "dress in frocks, bare in the middle and scant above and below." Isa Anshary warned that Muslims should not allow standards to degenerate or to accept without qualification the many trends and influences produced during the modern age. He admitted that Muslims have freedom to think, and that it should used carefully "to contemplate, to compare and to criticize," and in that way understand the true nature of change and its impact on Muslims. He concluded that society would develop correctly if it was cognizant of religion and adopted principles based on a genuine fear and respect of God.[61]

While there was only limited discussion of modern developments in general, there were many Persis articles and *fatāwā* that attempted to deal with the individual problems that arose when these trends came into contact with particular religious beliefs and practices. Health advances had to be adjusted to Muslim dietary regulations; economic thinking and institutions collided with Muslim laws of pious giving and usury; and the women's emancipation movement challenged Muslim rules of conduct for its women.

1. *Modern Medical Practice*

Regarding modern medical practice, several Persis *fatāwā* pointedly suggest that persons with afflictions and diseases should consult medical specialists rather than rely on folk cures. But while modern medical practice was accepted, several Persis *fatāwā* noted the possibility that medical treatment could interfere with religious ritual and transgress religious prohibitions. One Persis writer noted a *Ḥadīth* recorded by Abū Dāwūd, which stated that God had put sickness on the earth

[61] Anshary, *Revolusi*, 36–37.

but had provided a cure for every illness. The *Ḥadīth* warned lest sickness be treated with methods and drugs that were forbidden by religion, for permissible drugs and methods did exist for the curing of every illness.[62] In line with this *Ḥadīth*, Persis writers stated that Muslims could not take medicine containing alcohol, but did note that in an emergency where a Muslim's life was at stake, medicine containing alcohol could be used, if appropriate, and if other medicine was not available.[63] The drinking of blood for reasons of health was prohibited, but several *fatāwā* stated that the characteristics of a blood transfusion were entirely different than that of drinking blood, and judged that transfusion was a permissible act.[64] Several *fatāwā* noted the problem of medical practice during the Fast, and maintained that taking medicine in the daytime during the fasting month did not negate the Fast for a sick person. The rationale for this judgment was that taking medicine, while similar to eating and drinking, entered the mouth and passed to the stomach, actually had a different purpose and could not be considered to be either food or drink.[65] Other *fatāwā* used parallel arguments to allow injections and enemas for the ill during the Fast.[66]

Persis writers decided that birth control for Muslims was permissible. This *fatwā* was based on a *Ḥadīth* recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Muslim and Abū Dāwūd, which cited the Prophet's permission for Muslims to practice *coitus interruptus* for the prevention of pregnancy, and hence, by analogy, concluded that other types of birth control were permitted as well. The same *fatāwā* noted that birth control included only the prevention of pregnancy, and that abortion was clearly forbidden by Islam.[67] Several *fatāwā* decided that artificial insemination caused considerable problems regarding Muslim family life, inheritance and other matters, and concluded that it would be better if not practiced, but an absolute prohibition on it was not given.[68]

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[62] *Al-Muslimun*, III, 25 (April 1956), 4; *Al-Muslimun*, II, 3 (June 1955), 10.
[63] *Al-Muslimun*, II, 8 (November 1955), 5–6.
[64] *Al-Muslimun*, I, 7 (October 1954), 5. Cf., M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Pemindahan Darah* (Jakarta, 1954).
[65] *Al-Muslimun*, III, 25 (April 1956), 8.
[66] *Al-Muslimun*, II, 7 (October 1955), 7; *Sual-Djawab*, 3, 1.
[67] *Al-Muslimun*, II, 9 (November 1955), 4–7.
[68] *Al-Muslimun*, I, 9 (December 1954), 10.

2. *Economics*

There was ample discussion among Persis writers concerning economics and its effects on Indonesian Muslims. Moehammad Natsir, for example, even before he became a government minister, showed considerable awareness of modern economic theory and practice. In an article written in 1932 he had explained that in Islam wealth is considered to be a blessing, given by God for the enjoyment of all people; this was a common reference among modernist Muslims throughout both eras under discussion in this book. In 1956 in his speech before the Constituent Assembly he approached the subject in a different manner, arguing that Islam has not provided laws on economics and other subjects to "regulate 1001 detailed circumstances," which would be subject to change in different places and times. Rather, he stated, Islam has provided the basic kernel which, when used in conjunction with human reason, could be applied at any place in any age.[69] He quoted *Al-Tawbah* 34 promising a painful doom to those who do not use their wealth in a way pleasing to God, and stated that this reference rejected capitalism, which he characterized as "greedy and covetous, . . . the amassing of wealth, gold and silver . . . without considering society." He used analogy to state that wealth should not be concentrated among only a few persons to provide them with luxury while others suffered, but rather should be "turned into the productive process for raising the level of prosperity so that greater equality would exist."[70] This concern for communal prosperity and for sharing both wealth and poverty was a common held belief among Indonesian of the period, both Muslim and non-Muslim, that had much to do with the leveling effects of the Revolution through which they had passed and the commonality they felt at the time for communal solutions to their problems. Other newly independent nations in the 1950s and 1960s often adopted the same attitude of sharing among the masses and elites alike. Significantly, as stated in the first chapter, this viewpoint had been discussed in detail earlier in the century in Sarekat Islam councils.

While condemning selfish capitalism, Moehammad Natsir was also clearly opposed to the sort of socialism espoused by Communism. He saw Marxist dialectic, with its insistence on the inevitability of

[69] Indonesia, *Dasar*, I, 130.
[70] Indonesia, *Dasar*, I, 134–135.

class struggle, as setting one class of Muslims against another, and maintained that this viewpoint was contrary to the Muslim view of the equality and brotherhood of all humans. He stated that the Muslim rich were not to be the enemies of the Muslim poor, but rather their guides and benefactors. He admitted, however, that there were many movements—"liberal, radical, fascist and communist"—that wanted to improve economic and social differences so as to "lessen the differences among humans," but claimed that, except for Islam, all of them had defects. Only Islam, as the religion of God, he declared, was capable of bringing about equality by raising the low economic and social condition of the masses to the "level of humanity" and by stripping the elites of their special status making them common mortals.[71] Natsir's own ideals regarding the equality of humankind, rather than any command of Islam, probably led him to prefer a moderate brand of socialism. His speeches in parliament often reflected a socialistic stance, but these had no specific characteristics that branded them as Islamic, as opposed to any other socialistic legislation.[72] It appears then that Natsir was not really arguing for a specific system of economics, but rather that any system adopted by Indonesia should be guided by basic Muslim principles.

Indonesian Muslims, like Muslims in other parts of the Islamic world, gave considerable scrutiny to the institution of the poor tax and the prohibition of usury in trying to fit them to the contemporary age. Regarding the poor tax,[73] Persis jurists were meticulous in working out the formulae contained in *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* for assessing the amount of donation due from each Muslim.[74] Moehammad Natsir noted that the tax, given each year at a time of celebration, was a social pressure built into Islam to prompt the rich to alleviate the burdens of the poor. As such, he believed that it could play a positive and important role in contemporary Indonesian society.[75] Persis jurists made no mention of the suggestions put forward by some Muslims that the poor tax should be incorporated into the national tax system and the money used for social welfare programs.

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[71] *Pembela Islam*, 56 (December 1932), 3–4.

[72] Indonesia, *Risalah*, 1951, X, 4231–4242; Natsir, *Capita*, II, 19–27.

[73] "Poor tax" is a misnomer, and "contribution" fits better in most places since the giving is voluntary, even if some social pressure exists.

[74] See Ahmad Hassan, et al., *Kitab Zakat* (Bandung, 1934); Abdulkadir Hassan, *Risalah Zakat* (Jakarta, 1961); Ahmad Hassan, *Risalah Zakat liwat setahun* (Bangil, 1955).

[75] *Pembela Islam*, 56 (December 1932), 3; cf. Smith, *Islam*, 159–160.

They did state, however, that it was permissible for such funds to be used for the construction and operation of schools, hospitals and other social welfare projects. These writers interpreted broadly the injunction in the *Qur'ān* to distribute the funds to the destitute, the wayfarer and "in the way of God," and stated that the tax could be used in any way that would aid the Muslim cause.[76]

Usury (*ribā*) presented a more difficult problem than the poor tax, since, at first glance, usury as defined by Muslim clerics appeared to clash with the operation of modern financial institutions, in particular, banks, insurance companies,[77] and cooperatives. In line with modernist Muslim thinking in the Arab world, the Persis jurists found these financial institutions compatible with Islam. The usual Muslim position since the time of the Prophet, however, had been that the prohibition on usury included not only a fee for money borrowed, but any profit by the lender on the goods that were lent. However, the need for credit had often led to a circumvention of this rule by the use of the double sale and other devices.[78] In contrast to this traditional approach, the Persis jurists defined usury merely as "excessive profit" and stated that interest gained from banks and cooperatives was reasonable and should not be considered as included in the Prophet's condemnation of usury. In a *fatwā* discussing cooperatives one Persis writer stated that the Prophet's imposition of the rules on usury probably arose from the practice common to pre-Islamic Arabia where double the amount of interest was sometimes called for when extending the duration of a loan. "The sum of one hundred *dirham* became two hundred, and so on, several times."[79] The *fatwā* noted that such a practice could easily lead to a considerable loss of wealth on the borrower's part, and having perceived that such loss was unjust, the Prophet had forbidden such practices.

A second *fatwā* titled "Returning a sum greater than was borrowed," explained the Persis position further, and challenged as invalid the used by traditionalist Muslims to justify their stand on

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[76] *Al-Muslimun*, I, 4 (June 1955), 8–12.

[77] Insurance was considered by many Muslims to be a form of gambling. See Mochtar Naim, "The Nahdlatul Ulama Party (1952–1955)," MA thesis presented to McGill University, 1960, 156.

[78] Gaudefroys-Demombynes, *Muslim*, 190–191.

[79] *Al-Muslimun*, II, 6 (September 1955), 7–8; *Pembela Islam*, 51 (September 1932) and 52 (October 1932); Ahmad Hassan, *Kitab Ribaa (Bandung, 1932)*; and *Pembela Islam* (May 1951), 15–16.

usury. The *Ḥadīth* stated that repayment of a loan of grain was to be in the same grain with no increase, and that there was to be no dealing in futures (i.e., the success of the next harvest). The writer of the *fatwā* claimed that this *Ḥadīth* was not valid because its terms were impossible to fulfill, for one who borrowed grain could not possibly repay in the same grain until after a later harvest. "Is it fitting for the Prophet to have received such guidance from God?" he asked, and then answered his own question by stating, "Certainly not, and we can never accept that the Prophet uttered" such words. This *fatwā* also dismissed other *Ḥadīth* presented by traditionalist Muslims as proof of their position on usury "because they (the *Ḥadīth*) conflict with one another.[80] A third religious *fatwā* stated that Muslims were permitted to use modern banks and to accept the interest they gave on savings. This *fatwā* concluded that a Muslim was remiss in his obligations if he failed to accept interest from a bank, and stated that "if a person regards it as unclean, let him give it to an orphanage or a school."[81]

3. *The Laws of Severe Punishment*

The punishments prescribed by *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* for certain unrighteous acts (*ḥuḍūḍ*) have often been difficult for Muslims to adjust with current social norms and behavior. There has been criticism from many quarters—Muslim and non-Muslim—of such punishments as flogging those taken in adultery and severing the hand of the thief.[82] Secularists in Indonesia found such punishments to be totally unfitting, and even Muslim organizations attempted to make them less harsh. Muhammadiyah scholars, attempting to follow the spirit of the commands, held, for example, that theft should be punished by imprisonment, and maintained that such confinement was a limitation on the thief's power to steal, i.e., a figurative way of "severing a person's arm."[83] Unlike the Muhammadiyah, Persis scholars interpreted the punishment for theft literally and maintained that a thief's hand should be severed, since God had clearly commanded it. In *Government in the Islamic Manner*, Ahmad Hassan defended this viewpoint by stating that such harsh punishments served as a constant

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[80] *Al-Muslimun*, I, 2 (March 1955), 7.
[81] *Sual-Djawab*, XIII, 72–73.
[82] See for example, *Al-Nur* 24:2–4; *Al-Baqarah* 2:178; *Al-Ma'idah* 38–39.
[83] Interview with Fakih Usman, July 10, 1963.

reminder to criminals and discouraged other persons from committing similar crimes. Ahmad Hassan admitted that Islamic laws of punishment were harsh and stated that they were meant to frighten, but justified such an approach by stating that "90% of the laws of non-Muslim states are intended for that purpose" (i.e., to frighten people) and yet "lawlessness is higher in non-Islamic lands." He concluded that if such laws were applied regularly throughout Indonesia they would cause much initial distress, "but as generations passed, the new groups would be less likely to err and the country would become more righteous.[84]

This entire issue of state application of Islamic and non-Islamic law was addressed in several *fatāwā* appearing in *The Muslims*. One *fatwā* answered the question by a petitioner as follows: "Every nation dispenses justice according to its various laws: What is the ruling?" The response noted that Islam recognized laws dealing both with worship and with temporal matters. Muslims could not avoid the necessity of obeying the laws of their religion since these are obligatory, not optional. National laws which do not have an Islamic form could be observed by Muslims if they did not conflict with the commands or requirements of Islam. The *fatwā* concluded that, if these laws conflicted with the tenets of Islam, it would be forbidden to obey them. The *fatwā* was based on a *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet stating that "We may not obey people in rebelliousness to God; only in obeying what exists in goodness."[85] A second, supplementary *fatwā* went directly to the heart of the matter concerning the laws of severe punishment, when the writer noted that Muslim were obliged to distinguish between laws based on Islamic principles and those based on other criteria. If a government used punishments identical to those propounded by Islam without intending to do so, it would not be the same as following the laws of God; it merely conformed to those laws. The writer noted that intention is important. "We, the community of Islam, are never satisfied with laws that accidentally fit with the laws of our religion." The writer noted that a lighter sentence could not be imposed since the sentence was clearly stated in the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet. He warned his readers that not to follow God's command constituted sin.[86] While not criticizing the gov-

[84] Hassan, *Pemerintahan*, 27, 32, 30.
[85] *Al-Muslimun* 1, 12 (March 1955), 9.
[86] *Al-Muslimun* 2, 12 (March 1956), 8.

ernment directly, the writer of the *fatwā* strongly implied that Indonesian national law was inconsistent with his concept of sacred law. In a similar *fatwā* a Persis jurist warned Muslims they were not individually free to inflict the punishments ordered by God for certain crimes, but must allow law-enforcing agencies to administer justice. He specifically stated that "in an Islamic state, as well as in other states, it was not right for the people to become judges themselves," but, rather, it was the responsibility of specified organs of the national state to do so."[87] This *fatwā* was consistent with all Persis *fatāwā* and articles that Muslims as individuals or an organization did not have the authority to assign punishments for acts it believed contravened sacred law, but only made judgments as to what actions were within the limits of proper behavior and what was not. Nor did the Persatuan Islam agitate for the inclusion of these punishments in national law. Apparently Persis members sought only to defend such punishments as the command of God, but left the implementation to the state. The literal stance taken on this issue by the Persatuan Islam and several other Muslim groups had an unfavorable impact on Muslim political fortunes, and many nominal Muslims and Muslims with secularist tendencies did not give their support to Muslim political parties because they believed that the establishment of an Islamic state might lead to the implementation of such harsh Islamic laws.

4. *Woman's Role in Society*

Persis activists propounded the viewpoint that there were essential differences of character between men and women that fitted each gender for different functions in life. Muslims, both in the Persatuan Islam and in other organizations, argued that within this division of function the two genders operated in different spheres, and that one sex could not be regarded as superior to the other. "Men have several functions that cannot be performed by women and vice versa, . . . but for the well being of both sexes, mutual aid and cooperation is essential." Men were regarded as controlling national political matters, the religious community, and the family, and providing livelihood and sustenance for the family. Woman's role was regarded as being concerned with housekeeping and motherhood. ʿAli Alhamidy, in his monograph *Islam and Marriage*, stressed that men were assigned

[87] *Al-Muslimun* 1, 9 (December 1954), 10–11.

intelligence and strength, and women attractiveness.[88] Ahmad Hassan, on the other hand, stressed the legal case and stated that such a division of responsibility was set by religious law. "Women must obey," he stated, "and men must provide subsistence."[89]

In religious matters, Ahmad Hassan noted, "a woman may not become a prophet or a judge, and may not become a prayer leader [at the mosque] in public," and "it is forbidden for a woman to become a leader over men. . . . They are forbidden to . . . perform the burial rite, to give the call to prayer and to give the response to the prayer leader during worship."[90] Ali Alhamidy explained that men, but never women, had been chosen by God to reveal His religious message to humankind, and, accordingly, stressed his belief that religious activity was man's responsibility. Alhamidy specifically pointed out, however, that women could undertake to teach and to spread religion among other women and that they could be active in women's affairs. The political role of women was limited to activity among other women while political activity in which women sat with men on political party governing boards, or on elected and appointed government councils, was specifically condemned by the Persatuan Islam.[91] Ahmad Hassan stated that during the time of the Prophet, women did not sit on councils and that to do so in present circumstances would obviously contravene the *Sunnah.* He argued further that Islam forbade women and men to imitate one another, and since the ruling function belonged to man, any attempt by a woman to sit on a council was actually imitating a man and *ipso facto* wrong.[92] An article appearing in *Islamic Defender* in 1956, and signed with the editorial letters M.S., stated that those groups in Indonesia championing free association of men and women and supporting a wider role for women in politics and society were actually hypocrites. Such groups, M.S. maintained, did not really honor women, but only used the "presence of women to attract men to political parties, meetings and conferences," and allowed them to become film stars and to appear in advertisements "only in order

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[88] Alhamidy, *Perkawinan,* 5; *Pembela Islam,* 35 (October 1931), 11.
[89] Hassan, *Perempuan,* 4; *Al-Muslimun,* III, 33 (November–December 1957), 4.
[90] Hassan, *Perempuan,* 8.
[91] Alhamidy, *Islam,* 6, 89.
[92] Hassan, *Perempuan,* 9–11, 14; *Pembela Islam* (New Series), 1 (March 1956), 26; *Al-Muslimun,* I, 2 (May 1954), 10–12.

to make money."[93] The Manifesto of 1958 stated that Western feminism was not acceptable in the Islamic model and that Persatuan Islam women did not seek to emulate it.[94]

The Persis jurists maintained that men and women could not mix socially or associate freely with one another, except within the family circle and through marriage. As the religious basis for the separation of the sexes, they cited *Al-Nūr* 31, which states that women should dress modestly and reveal their charms only to their husbands and close relatives.[95] During the lifetime of the Prophet, stated Ahmad Hassan, women were allowed to leave the house, to go to the marketplace, go on the pilgrimage, to undertake a large number of everyday tasks and to perform religious obligations that would bring them into the view of men. On the assumption that such actions were proper or they would have been corrected by the Prophet, Ahmad Hassan concluded that women could appear before men while undertaking similar activities at the present time, but nothing more since the Prophet gave no express or implied permission for any other contacts and indicated in a number of instances that the sexes should be kept apart as much as possible.[96] Reflecting an argument in common use by modernist Muslims throughout the Muslim world, Ali Alhamidy stated that a chief characteristic of woman is allure, and not properly controlled, this allure could bring harm to both men and women.[97] An article signed with the initials M.S. and appearing in *Islamic Defender* echoed the same argument and concluded that women have an allure of sweetness—even if some women are not really sweet—and if they are not properly cherished and protected "they have the means to destroy themselves and other people as well."[98] In this context, the separation of the sexes, stated Ahmad Hassan, was not intended to be a "humbling or lowering of either sex," but an indication of Islam's awareness of women and at attempt to honor them.[99] This concern for what was described as the disruptive power of women on humankind dictated the organization's view as what it regarded as proper clothing for

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[93] *Pembela Islam* (New Series) 2 (April 1956), 35.
[94] Persatuan Islam, *Manifes*, p. 67.
[95] *Al-Nur*, 31.
[96] Hassan, *Perempuan*, 13–14.
[97] Alhamidy, *Islam*, 8–9.
[98] *Pembela Islam* (New Series), 2 (April 1956), 35.
[99] Hassan, *Perempuan*, 8.

women. "Islam honors women," stated an article in *Islamic Defender*, "by requiring that women wear clothing that covers their bodies and their shapes, in order that they not be appealing to men, and to avoid the temptations "which lead to corruption, perversion and destruction of society." "People who do not sincerely honor women," the article continued, "allow them to dress in provocative Western clothes where the shape of the breasts and thighs are an enticement to men." Coupled with free association with men, such clothing could lead to a situation "as in England, where up to 70% of the schoolgirls" are no longer virgins.[100]

This strict view of the role of women in society brought the Persatuan Islam, and especially Ahmad Hassan, into conflict and debate with other Muslim groups on many particular points. There are records of debate between Ahmad Hassan and Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy and between Ahmad Hassan and Moenawar Khalil on minor differences of interpretation regarding women's status in society. In the debate with Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, Ahmad Hassan argued that it was not permissible for a woman to shake hands while greeting a government or party official,[101] and in the debate with Munawar Khalil, Ahmad Hassan maintained that women are excused (but not necessarily excluded) from attending the service at the mosque for Friday community prayers.[102] In another dispute, Ahmad Hassan questioned the *fatwā* of the Legal Council of the Masjumi Party in June 1956 stating that women could travel outside the country without being accompanied by their male relatives The Legal Council's *fatwā* was intended to sanction the trip of leading women members of Masjumi to Communist China and the Soviet Union. The *fatwā* maintained that these women could go unaccompanied so long as several Muslim women journeyed together and seclusion was maintained. The *fatwā* justified its stand on the basis that the trip was for national and party interests and could be considered as "special exertion" when normal legal proscriptions could be set aside. Ahmad Hassan called for debate with the scholars of the Legal Council on

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[100] *Pembela Islam* (New Series), 1 (March 1957), 10; *Al-Muslimun*, I, 8 (November 1955), 11.

[101] *Daulah Islamyah*, I, 8 (August 1957), 12; *Al-Muslimun*, I, 7 (September 1956), 8–10.

[102] Ahmad Hassan, *Wadjibkan Perempuan Berdjumah?* (Bangil, 1959); *Al-Muslimun*, III, 29 (July 1957), 11.

this issue, but as his challenge[103] went unanswered, he contented himself with issuing a *fatwā* refuting the Masjumi *fatwā*.[104]

It is apparent, however, that some members of the Persatuan Islam, perhaps those who were influenced by the liberal modernists in Masjumi, did not entirely agree with stringent Persis views concerning women, and advocated—and even allowed—their daughters to dress in Western clothes, and to associate with males in the Western manner. A 1956 issue of *Islamic Defender* carried an article, again signed with the initials M.S., which chided the members of the Persatuan Islam for "new innovation." The innovation, as the article saw it, was Westernism, and particularly its manifestations toward womanhood. The article stated that the members of the Persatuan Islam were no longer guilty of such things as prayers for the dead, making the Friday sermon too long, and other old innovations. However, M.S. stated, "In the Persatuan Islam there are not a few who allow their daughters to dress modern . . . with chests and posteriors protruding, . . . allowing them to become guides [scouts] and associate with boys, . . . and even, on one occasion, . . . one member's house was used by young men and women for a dance."[105] Probably few members of the Persatuan Islam would much sympathize with such action and undoubtedly no one would attempt to defend freedom for women in society with a *fatwā*; Persis jurists were clear on their stance.

5. *Some Comparisons*

Most Muslim organizations and personalities of the mid-twentieth century were agreed on the acceptance of modern science and technological discovery and found it compatible with Islamic teachings and practice. But nearly all had difficulty accepting the values of Western civilization that accompanied this new knowledge as it was presented to the contemporary world. The theme was consistent in Mawdūdī, al-Bannā' and Quṭb that Islam was linked to knowledge and to its advancement and that historically there had not been a problem in this regard. If Islam was technologically behind in the twentieth century, according to them, then it was due to the

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[103] *Al-Muslimun*, III, 28 (July 1956), 5.

[104] *Daulah Islamyah*, I, 8 (August 1957), 12; *Al-Muslimun*, III, 28 (July 1956), 5–9.

[105] *Pembela Islam* (New Series) 1 (March 1956), 6–7. See also Anshary, *Revolusi Islam*, 36.

inadequacies of Muslims for allowing themselves to fall behind in the general competition among civilizations, and that it was the Muslims own responsibility for overcoming backwardness, mastering the new learning, and proceeding to reinvent Muslim civilization so that it became as important as it was when Islam was young. Their views are nearly identical with those of the Persatuan Islam. Concerning specifics, Mawdūdī, al-Bannā' and Quṭb were concerned that women's place and protection in Islam not be disturbed and all wanted the laws of severe punishment to be retained and certainly applied in any Islamic state. Again there was close proximity with the statements of Persis writers on these matters. On Economics, however, there were some differences in stress and importance. Mawdūdī's thinking stressed the developmental role incumbent on Muslims and saw the Islamic state as one means of raising prosperity among Muslims in general, while al-Bannā', while not always so pointed in his thinking about the matter, initiated many practical projects among his followers that had to do with upgrading the economic life of lower-class Muslims. Mawdūdī eschews socialism for open market economy, while the Ikhwān and Quṭb found private enterprise as too individualistically motivated and favored socialism as more likely to lead to the distribution inherent in Islamic principles. Persatuan Islam activists made no great distinction on these two systems, but often spoke in mildly socialistic terms. Quṭb finds social equality important and regards economics as necessarily advancing that agenda through Muslim concepts related to that field of knowledge. He seems to be most like the activists of the Persatuan Islam who regarded Islam's treatment of economics to be concerned with overcoming social division as its primary goal.[106]

[106] Moussalli, *Radical*, 172–200; Nasr, *Mawdudi*, 103–106.

SECTION SUMMARY

The dedication of Persis activists in this period is impressive. In politics, education and Islamic propagation activities they accomplished much, as indicated by the Masjumi regional organization they built in West Java, the school system they re-founded and expanded, and the publications that appeared from their press. Both women and men were involved, and their energy rested in their identity as activists for a committed, modernist, and activist Islam. But it appears that their's was a mission that was at times pursued a little too intensely, with a message that was viewed by many as being too absolutist, and was not always sensitive to the position or feelings of others who found themselves on opposite side of issues. This was very apparent in politics, but less so in relationships with other Muslims. Consequently Persis identity was something of a paradox that needs clarification before an assessment of its work can really be made.

The following major points summarize major concerns of the Persatuan Islam:

1. It was incumbent that Indonesian independence be preserved, the Indonesian state enhanced and that the rules and governance of the republic be converted to an Islamic form and reality. The conception from before independence, calling for a simple Islamic nation existing alongside other Islamic nations, was put aside, for a greater expression of Indonesian nationhood, while still expressing itself through an Islamic identity. The revolutionary spirit of the age made a great impact on Persis activists and they saw their efforts in the political realm as epitomized in the terms "radical," "revolutionary," and "Islamic." In this ideology Indonesia was to proclaim itself an Islamic state, was to establish Islamic law as the basis of the system of justice, and was to have committed Muslims filling the political offices, ruling with a serious intention to initiate and execute policy reflecting Islamic values and standards. This stance was to take Persis activists directly into the political arena and reflected the same intensity of commitment made in the earlier period.

2. Defense against opponents dedicated to Islam's weakening and ultimate destruction were to be vigorously opposed. The old threats from the Ahmadiyah Qadiyan, Islamic traditionalism, and secular

nationalism presented some problems and needed some attention at particular periods, but they appeared as minor in comparison to the rising threat posed by the resurgent communist movement with its anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic message. Clear mobilization was called for in combating this threat, backed as it was by the forces of international communism based in the Soviet Union and China. This effort called for a major campaign in which the resources of the movement were concentrated to oppose this movement that threatened both Islamic and Indonesian life. To this end broadsheets, books, pamphlets and manifestos called for action, and political coalitions with other anti-communist groups were promoted to act as a spearhead for the movement.

3. Emphasis on Islamic values and on observing proper behavior according to the dictates of the Islamic religion was given new direction with the creation of a new jurisprudence based on *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*, that would give all Indonesian Muslims an opportunity to regulate their own lives with God's law. Persis scholars, particularly at Bangil, undertook this formulation as their contribution to the structuring of a dedicated Islamic community for Indonesian Muslims. While the motive for this goal was not entirely clear in the early part of the era, this concept strengthened and gained clarity as the era progressed, although it was never put forward to the Muslim community as a plan, project or reality. In actuality, however, it marked the beginnings of a very distinctive version of Islamic law, although there could be considerable dispute as to whether it in any way was an Indonesian variant of Islamic jurisprudence, since so much of what was fashioned defied the Indonesian tradition as relevant to its construction. It is only in retrospect that the religious decision-giving efforts of the Bangil scholars can be seen as forming a jurisprudential school, and, indeed, probably would have been denied by them at the time.

4. Cleansing society of superstitions, practices that conflicted with good Islamic practice and competing loyalties, remained important in the Persis outlook. Formal schools of education gained more importance, which continued a trend begun in the 1930s, and the role of religion in the curriculums of those schools was more clearly stated. In adult society Islamic intensification efforts continued to be important. Dissemination of the message through printed materials continued as it had in the earlier colonial era.

A. *Political Activity*

In the political field the Persatuan Islam activists accepted the Indonesian political system as it functioned, both during the Revolution and the Liberal Democracy Era, and worked to achieve their goals in a manner permissible within the system. While not satisfied with the outcomes of the system itself in many respects, they nonetheless accepted those outcomes, whether concerning policy or electoral decisions. Notwithstanding strong rhetoric on what was and what was not permissible in Islamic law, activists were identified with the Indonesian nation state in a very positive sense and did not seek to threaten the system with extra-legal activity, even though they were not always perceived in that way. While there were charges that they were very zealous during the period, there is nothing to suggest that they ever sought to move outside the system. It is true that one member, Moehammad Natsir, did go with a rebel movement at the end of the period; he was at that time acting not as a Persis member, but as a leader of a faction of the Masjumi party which had decided that severe action was needed to restore the republic. But other activists did not join him. Moreover, this decision was consistent with earlier practice by Persis activists that was apparent even in the late colonial and Japanese periods, when they worked for the goals they felt were legitimate in the confines of the existing political system. When they found it not possible to move within a tolerant system, they retreated to wait for another, more favorable time, as happened in the Japanese period. Here, in the period under examination, they had identified with the Republic of Indonesia early on and stayed with it throughout the period. One can say that they were committed politically to the nation-state of Indonesia, even though their own ideology questioned the whole concept of nation-states.

Also, Persis activists accepted the role that the nation placed on its political elite—which, in the period under examination certainly included all mass organizations—to act as a mobilizer of the general population for participation in the political system. This unstated, but implicit charge, demanded that the elite participate in politics, spread political information, and encourage the general population to take part in the elections for officials. Without this work by mass organizations it is doubtful whether the government itself would have been successful in its own activities of bringing the people as much

into the system as was done. The Persatuan Islam was very active in fulfilling this charge among committed Muslims. For its part, the Persatuan Islam framed a political program, put forward some of its activists as candidates, took part in a political party, constantly let its public know what the important issues were, and organized them to vote in elections. In this they contributed totally in fulfilling an implicit national duty.

Further, Persis activists took part in formulating a Muslim political agenda that could be presented to the population as one of the major choices to be made in directing the nation. In any democratic system—and the Indonesian parliamentary system was designed to be that—it is essential that political factions appear and lay out policy alternatives so that options are available to leaders and voters. Accordingly, Persis statements on the nature of the state, the threat of communism, the pitfalls of secularism and other matters were legitimate contributions to the dynamics of a functioning democratic process. That the political statements were strongly ideological and considered "too strong" in some quarters is, after all, acceptable in a democratic system, which attempts to fashion consensus from a broad array of competing views including those that are not always acceptable to others. In this sense Persis political formulations were an important part of the political drama unfolding at the time.

Finally, the Persatuan Islam can be regarded as having achieved success in a way that had eluded them in the period leading up to independence by having three of its activists accepted as important on the national scene, namely Moehammad Natsir, Moehammad Isa Anshary, and Ahmad Hassan. One became a prime minister and a long-time chair of the Masjumi party, the second was a Masjumi party leader in West Java and, for a time, a member of the governing council of Masjumi, and the third was recognized as leading theologian of the modernist faction and served on government and Masjumi party councils dealing with matters of Muslim jurisprudence. There were others, such as Fachruddin Al-Kahiri, who were very active politically on the West Javanese political scene. These four factors are all substantial contributions to leadership of the political system and national endeavor of the time.

The negative aspect to their political activity, and it was very real, was the very intense viewpoint put forward by its activists, that had a tendency to alarm others and lead them to regard Persis activists

as dogmatic and, often, as fanatics. Persis activists were not always as patient as they might have been and they seldom deferred easily to the wishes of the larger community. Persis statements on political matters were usually one-sided and close-minded. Resting on ideological assumptions as they did, the activists often failed to perceive that the motives of others were not necessarily drawn to the same set of assumptions as they were. Some degree of distance might be expected with those outside the Muslim community, but even here some degree of tolerance and understanding was called for since the Muslims were not able to command enough electoral support to have their own way politically, whether on the formation of government, on parliamentary issues, or in the consideration of issue of state identification in the Constituent Assembly. Under such conditions compromise was called for, and good compromise only occurs when there is good understanding of who is a potential ally, and also who is incapable of being an ally at all. The ideological set of Persis activists was not attuned to this type of activity, holding that there was only the truth as they viewed it and that anyone who thought different was outside the pale and, *ipso facto*, wrong. While those activists did make some distinctions among opponents—communists were seen as more dangerous than nationalists and castigated more sternly—all were told repeatedly how very wrong they were, not in simple terms, but in terms of religion with all its emotional consequences for people who held some sort of regard for the teachings of the religion. Members of the nationalist party who were also Muslims, and there were lots of them, could not have been happy with Persis assignments of "sinner" and "disbeliever" that were assigned to them for no other reason than they did not recognize the Persatuan Islam as right in all matters. Persis statements, always made without qualification, could easily be branded as fanaticism and they were, making any sort of reasonable and successful political alliance extremely unlikely and communications with the Persatuan Islam unproductive of any meaningful understanding. The Persatuan Islam made the task of Masjumi very difficult in its work of arranging political alliances.

B. *The Islamic Community*

In matters concerning the Muslim community the Persatuan Islam had a strong record; its contributions were unstinting and generous to the community as a whole, even if not wholly acceptable to the entire community. Certainly the Persatuan Islam was an efficient provider of information about Islam and about the value system that Muslims should espouse. It wrote books, spread information, and discussed issues, all with a solid Sunnī orientation overlaid with a modernist Muslim approach. Significantly, its efforts were generally successful and it had a reputation beyond its own membership for sound knowledge and good insight into the mainsprings of religion, as can be seen by the continual sale of its books and pamphlets, and by the large number of requests to its scholars for *fatāwā* on matters of religious belief and behavior. There was a strong appetite for such knowledge and insight after independence and the Persatuan Islam was one of those organizations that took the need seriously and provided what they could. In the main it provided good material consistent with the Islamic message as the activists saw it. This was a considerable contribution to the Indonesian Muslim community.

The efforts at assessing the world through terms of a modernist Muslim jurisprudence was an interesting development that needed to be done by some group; indeed several groups at the time and immediately afterward were urging that it be done. In this respect the Persis scholars served as a pilot project for the larger community; it was a brave endeavor. Its legal scholars demonstrated that the principles of *Qur'ān* and firm *Ḥadīth* could be used as the building blocks for a modern development of jurisprudence that would be consistent generally with the principles held by traditionalist schools of Sunnī Islam, without being imitative of them. The time period here was too brief to ascertain whether the jurisprudence could have wider applications, and, in any event, the attempt was never fully labeled as jurisprudence in its own right, but only an informal approach to the study of Islamic legal prescriptions. It was ignored by the government, even the Department of Religion, and by the other actors in the community of mass organizations, but the gist of the system was accepted by many pious Muslims both within and outside of the association. It is striking that most legal scholars studying Islamic law in Indonesia ignore the work of the Persatuan Islam

and do not regard it as a bold attempt to undertake the establishment of a modern form of Islamic law.

Persatuan Islam efforts at assessing the modern world are reasonable in the time and place that the Persatuan Islam operated, and Persis scholars did give some consideration of the impact the contemporary world, particularly that of the West, had on Indonesian society. Persis scholars did show some knowledge of the world beyond Indonesia and were moderately open to contemporary solutions. But Persis scholars were hindered by their own educational and life experiences, which were not conducive to providing insight into the problems of wider society and developing deep perception. Their *fatāwā* were often made too quickly, without adequate investigation into the nature of modern society and the application of new technology and methodology to the situation under review. The world had become a complex place that needed sophisticated understanding; Persis writers were not up to that standard. The second limitation had to do with the nature of the association itself. Unfortunately their concentration in knowledge-gathering was to the Islamic tradition, not to issues of contemporary society, and their *fatāwā* reflect this emphasis. Such emphasis severely limited the range of their answers and also kept them conservative in commentary, when fuller understanding might have provided more open, better answers. Still the effort that was made was valuable and had the virtue of placing two systems—Western and Islamic—alongside one another and coming up with some thoughtful conclusions, a rare commodity in the world at that time.

Also, the Persatuan Islam was a pioneer in Islamic education. Its boarding schools in both Bandung and Bangil were different from most other Islamic schools, whether compared with the modernist or traditionalists sides of the communal divide in Indonesia. At Bandung a mixture of modernist Muslim and general subjects was pursued in a form that was different than the modernist trend from the Muhammadiyah and the Minangkabau schools, as can be seen in the selection of texts that reflected a number of modernist texts from the Middle East for the study of Arabic. The schools at Bangil, concentrating almost totally on the religious tradition, were reminiscent of the commitment that traditionalist schools were famous for, but focused on the modernist approach instead; they succeeded in large part. Again the Persatuan Islam was a pilot project in education, but

it failed to convince others and it was left as a separate strain of education when national standards went on a different tact. But this was largely after this era was past. During the era the Persis endeavor was certainly legitimate and profitable for the students and for the Islamic community.

Within the Muslim community the Persatuan Islam was involved in propagation organization, given to education and intensification of religious knowledge and identification, whether in its schools or in its intensification activities. As such, it lived in an ideological world, rather than in a practical world as other organizations often did which pursued social welfare projects, such as the Muhammadiyah and even the Nahdlatul Ulama. In this context it was probably natural that its view regarding the immutability of Islamic teachings should be pursued vigorously. One can say that within the Muslim community there were periods when Persis activists did attack the views of fellow Muslims, but this seems to have been at times of stress, as when the Nahdlatul Ulama left Masjumi and the entire modernist-traditionalist rivalry boiled over. The rest of the time there was minimal polemic aimed against those Muslims who disagreed as there had been in the late colonial period. Most of its argumentation seems to have been concentrated on the political scene against those it opposed there.

C. *Within Persatuan Islam itself*

The decision to assign the religious scholar a greater role in the organization and to elevate the *fatwā* giver a say over organizational matters was a curious development. First it was somewhat surprising since the earlier statements of Ahmad Hassan and his colleagues during the late colonial period to the effect that every Muslim had the obligation of seeking answers through use of independent investigation and that comparison among alternatives was an acceptable way of achieving that goal. The decision to elevate the religious scholar to the role of judge to determine what was right and wrong seems to attack that principle. Second, the practice was reminiscent of its ideological opponent, the Nahdlatul Ulam, where the scholars as a council had the option of discussing organizational policy and other decisions and passing judgment on them from the standpoint of their consistency with religious principle. On the one hand, it is

strange that Persis legalists should regard the practice of its rival as correct, but on the other hand there was much practice and doctrine used by the traditionalists that Persis legalists found correct; it was only that the legitimation of it had to come through the sources Persis legalists themselves found important. In fact, Persis scholars apparently found traditionalist modes and titles appealing, as is seen in the adoption of personal titles of *kiyai* and *haji* and the use of the title "pesantren" for their religious schools. The Persatuan Islam moved during this era toward more conventional modes of Indonesian Islamic identification with were often reminiscent of traditionalist patterns of behavior and away from life styles and practices which might have been regarded as somehow non-Islamic. Truly there seems to have been some stress in the organization for such a return to historical styles and behavior.

The Persatuan Islam maintained that, as a general rule, all things outside the area of worship were permitted by Islam unless specifically prohibited and that change was permissible so long as certain broad limitations established by Islam were not transgressed. In some areas, such as economics, modern medical practice and scientific advancement, Persis writers interpreted this principle in a wide sense and showed a degree of openness in relating Muslim principles to new developments. This broad interpretation was apparent, for example, in Ahmad Hassan's discussion of usury, which he defined as excessive interest, and in his explanation that Muslims were permitted to use banks and cooperatives because these institutions charged and paid normal rates of interest. The same liberal attitude was also present in Persis' *fatāwā* permitting blood transfusions and birth control measures, which illustrate the Persatuan Islam's attitude of attempting to relate religion to the thought, goals, and developments of the twentieth century. It is true, however, that Persis scholars were not very conversant with modern science, medical theory, the findings of the Social Sciences, and other knowledge appearing in the first half of the twentieth century, and this affected to a considerable degree their ability to understand the significance of the urban, industrialized world they were becoming a part of. After the 1950s they would have confronted with even more complicated issues, as can be seen in the matters under scrutiny among the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals of the 1980s and 1990s.

In some matters not related to worship, the Persatuan Islam opposed pressures for change and moved contrary to the direction of devel-

opments in the contemporary world. Persis legalists opposed basic changes in the traditional status of Muslim women and chose a rigid interpretation of scripture to oppose what they saw as radical, unwarranted change. Their insistence on traditional dress and limitation of women's movement in society preserved what they defined as positive Muslim social values, while rejecting their critics' charges that women held a subservient position under such rules of behavior. Persis legalists saw women with an equal, but separate position from men, and argued that there should be educational opportunities for women and freedom for women to contact other women for social, educational, political and religious purposes. These limited concessions show an effort to correct apparent inequities, without opening the way to what the Persatuan Islam regarded as destructive tendencies inherent in the radical changes advocated by the secularists and other groups favoring emancipation for women. In this matter the Persatuan Islam was clearly on the conservative side of the spectrum of social thinking among Indonesians in general, but probably middle-of-the-road among Muslim groups.

It was not inconsistent for the Persatuan Islam to approve some contemporary developments while rejecting others. Scripture was the final authority on what could and what could not be accepted, and in the case of women's role in life, the Persatuan Islam believed that the progressive emancipation of women of the past century is not condoned by scripture. The Persatuan Islam was apparently satisfied that the limited liberalization of women's role in society it advocated achieved the proper adjustment of religious principle and contemporary development. However, in the matter of women's role in society and religion, the Persatuan Islam appears to have been guided by pre-judgment since it was not consistent with its own general principles. To wit, Persis legalists stated women's status was limited to what was permitted in *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*, but this stand contradicted its general guideline that change is permissible in matters not related to worship. Defense of the established system regarding women is obviously not wrong in itself, but the conservative arguments used in defense of their position on womanhood indicate that Persis legalists had not made the deep, careful examination of the role of women in society that they claimed to have made, and it is unlikely that they had examined the considerable literature that existed on the subject even at the time this matter was under consideration.

PART FOUR

CONCLUDING REMARKS

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

Section conclusions have been drawn about the work of the Persatuan Islam during both periods; it is not necessary to recapitulate those remarks. The question that remains to be discussed is whether there was any appreciable difference between the Persatuan Islam in the earlier period and the organization that existed in the later period. There are, of course, differences that relate to context, since the earlier period occurred at the end of a colonial system, whereas the later era witnessed the birth of a new, independent Indonesian state. The dynamics of the societies that existed in the two eras are obviously different, so it is not surprising that Persatuan Islam activity was realigned in the changed contexts. The political message changed slightly to accommodate the nation-state in the second era, when it was abhorred in the colonial period. The public debates of the earlier era were jettisoned for the full political participation of the republican period. On the other hand the religious message about the centrality of religion did not change very much and the activists continued their work of informing the Indonesian public of their Islamic obligations, especially the political duty to have government and law reflect fully Islamic principles. And, finally, there was little to distinguish the earlier approach from the later one, despite the transfer of one generation for another, and in both eras the activists were regarded as militant and divisive of Muslim unity for their insistence on their own interpretation of religious principles, whatever others had to say about them. There was a continuity here that was remarkable.

A. *Some Comparisons*

Comparison with three sets of other Muslim intellectual-activists is considered here in order to gain perspective concerning the place of the Persatuan Islam in development of Islam in the twentieth century. The group of Jamāluddīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā' preceded the Persatuan Islam, except for Rashīd Riḍā', who was a contemporary in the early part of Persis history. This group was chosen because it is widely given credit for popularizing the modernist movement and was influential among modernist Muslim

groups in Indonesia. The group of Hassan al-Bannā' and 'Alā Mawdūdī, were roughly the contemporaries of the Persatuan Islam in both periods under examination and their development of fundamentalist principles seems to have some similarities with the Persatuan Islam. The group of Nurcholish Madjied and Dawam Rahardjo appear later, beginning their work only in the 1970's when the periods under examination were past. They are in vogue at the current time and any preceding Indonesian group can be considered as a possible predecessor.

Regarding the first group of al-Afghānī, 'Abduh and Riḍā', we see some immediate similarities with the Persatuan Islam activists, in their concern that past practices of religious scholars had allowed many cases of unjustified innovation (*bidʿah*) to become part of religious worship and in their call for a return to *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* as a way of revitalizing Islam. These were the hallmarks of these three scholars and it was they, more than anyone else, who first raised the issue of reform in a meaningful way, and who made it a cogent movement within Islam. In a sense the activists of the Persatuan Islam were second-generation followers who applied that message to a somewhat different time and certainly in a different place. The call to the sources of Islam was very much the same, but, of course, "innovation" had a slightly different meaning; for the most part the Persatuan Islam activists found much more innovation that needed addressing because of the peculiarities of Indonesian Islam itself. Indeed, Indonesian Islam functioned in different languages and the cultures of the archipelago were far different than those of the Middle East. In addition, Persis writers accepted the view put forth by al-Afghānī that Muslims had been left behind in the development of civilizations and that it was necessary to catch up. The corollary to this assertion, namely, that knowledge had been given to humankind by God and that it should be used regardless of who developed it first, was also accepted, so that general knowledge developed by the West was acceptable so long as it was placed in an Islamic context and used in accordance with the standards of Islam. Persis writers also accepted the idea that Islam could be proud of its past and continued to be correct in spirit; accordingly, it should be modernized to make it once again the pacesetter of humankind. Further, there are similarities to 'Abduh in the emphasis on upgrading education, on the need for new materials to stimulate Muslim students and make their learning relevant to the modern age. Finally, there

were similarities to Rashīd Riḍā' in that the essence of Islam lies in the details as seen through a fine screening of Islam and placing its principles into a cogent and coherent model, which can be applied to actual living. In relationship to all three there were also similarities in the methods used for spreading the message, that is, through modern publications, through revitalized education, and through intensification activities (*tablīgh*). But, despite these similarities, care must be taken not to believe that the Persatuan Islam was simply a reflection of the three Middle Eastern scholars. G. Pijper is convinced that Ahmad Hassan was not a copyist, but worked out his own theories, and A. Minhaji concurs with that assessment. It would appear from the research that those two scholars present, as well as additional research done for this monograph, that the three Middle Eastern scholars did set the standards and guidelines that Persis activists followed, but that Ahmad Hassan and his colleagues/students went through the entire exercise themselves, arriving at their own conclusions on the basis of their own research. It is unclear how much checking was done against the works of the Middle Eastern scholars, but apparently there was some, even as there was some checking against the traditionalist scholars of the Middle East. Without it Persis opinions might have gone woefully astray from the Sunnī message, which did not happen.[1]

Regarding the fundamentalist scholars, Mawdūdī and Ḥasan al-Bannā', we again find some parallels, which may not be too surprising since those two were generational counterparts of the Persatuan Islam, located in different Muslim regions. There was the basic stance that Islam is a religion of rules and that the rules must be applied by political power if Muslims control the means of doing that. All three were involved against colonial rule in some form and all three had to deal with other Muslims who were not convinced that they wanted to carry the ideas of religious law to the extremes that of all three these actors wanted. The determined militancy of all three groups is similar, but there is a stronger tie to Mawdūdī than to Hasan al-Bannā', in that Persis activists were committed to the general cause of nationalism and then to the nation-state, which involved a change of ideological direction, while al-Bannā' faced other sorts of challenge in dealing with hostile governments. None of the three

[1] Nikki R. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Afghānī: A Political Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1974), 214–228; Adams, *Islam*, 70–78; 187–195.

were in good odor with the political authorities, but Mawdūdī and the Persatuan Islam were able to remain within the political system itself, while Hassan al-Bannā"s followers were unable to do so for various reasons. Unlike the two personalities who headed organizations dedicated directly to achieving political power, the Persatuan Islam leadership never chose direct political action, but worked through other organizations devoted to that end. When that door has been closed to them Persis activists have worked for their goals through non-political means, and have been willing to set aside political goals altogether as a means of attaining their final objective, which is a nation obedient to the laws of God. But the themes common to both groups of fundamentalists were there, i.e., "the modern Age of Ignorance" which threatens humankind with disaster, and Islamic law as a necessity for a modern Muslim society. Of course, there is the rhetoric of fundamentalist Islam which was used by the Persatuan Islam in much the same way as Mawdūdī and al-Bannā'.[2]

Concerning the neo-modernist Indonesian Muslim thinkers of the 1980's and 1990's, there are only a few parallels, but much difference. Looking at Nurcholish Madjied and Dawam Rahardjo, for example, there are striking differences in the first instance between sources for intellectual arguments. Both Madjid and Rahardjo draw freely on Western social science and comparative religion approaches and methodologies to examine material, and the presentation is done also in a Western format. This contrasts with the "question-answer" approach of the Persatuan Islam in its earliest works, and with a presentation that was frequently jurisprudential in nature in the later writings. Persis activists spent their time on Islamic learning and Islamic thinking, constantly turning over the Islamic message for its relevance to situations; their writings and pronouncements reflect that emphasis. In comparison Madjied and Rahardjo do much more exploring among non-scriptural sources to locate material and meaning in order to formulate answers to questions that speak as much to contemporary twentieth century civilization as to the tradition of Islam. Whether Persis writers formulate *fatāwā* or outline the obligations of Islam, they always present material ahistorically, seeing it valid for all time and noting no differences in time and place. Madjied and Rahardjo always recognize an historical dimension in their dis-

[2] Nasr, *Mawdudi*, 41–46, 72–74; Abu-Rabi, *Intellectual*, 69–91.

cussions and find both time and place important and considerations that often lead to complications considering the application of Islamic principles. Finally, the application of both sets of scholars is always theoretical, for that is the nature of intellectual argument, but both groups are attuned to the actual political and economic conditions of the time in their own ways. The major difference is that Persis writers spoke only to the Muslim community which concurred with them already, while Madjied and Raharjo aim at a wider audience of mostly believers, but some non-Muslims as well, and both understand that not all readers will agree with them. But, of course the emphasis of the two sets of scholars is much different, since the Persis scholars had a strong ideological bent and regarded the distribution of a message to be its *raison d'etre*, so formulation and amplification of the religious message was important. Madjied and Rahardjo regard Islamic teachings as important and draw on them frequently, but they are not propagandists, but devote their effort to the application of Islamic principles to the problems of contemporary society, without expecting an ideological outcome.[3]

In all three sets of comparison there are strong ties of Islamic understanding that bring the Persatuan Islam into proximity with all of the other groups. Point in time creates some obvious differences, as does location, but the primary difference seems to rest on sense of mission. In this regard the relationship with Mawdūdī and al-Bannā' are closest, particularly because of the importance of Islamic law to contemporary Islam and the attention given to making it applicable in the modern nation-state. The other two comparisons may not oppose this mission, it is merely that they did not have that as their chief purpose.

B. *Recapitulation and Assessment*

The Persatuan Islam's attempt to define Islam came at a crucial point in history, at a time when new ideas from the West and from other Muslim areas clashed with each other and with cultural and

[3] Greg Barton, "Indonesia's Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid as Intellectual Ulama: The Meeting of Islamic Traditionalism and Modernism in Neo-Modernist Thought," *Studia Islamika* 4, 1 (1997), 45–55, 63–68; Fachry Ali and Bachtiar Effendy, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam: Rekonstruksi Pemikiran Islam Indonesia Masa Orde Baru* (Jakarta, 1986), 199–215.

religious traditions already esteemed in Indonesia. The importance of the Persatuan Islam lay in an examination, critical in its time and context, of the problems created by the interaction of these diverse influences and in attempts to judge what was religiously permissible, and what was not.

The Persatuan Islam presented a religious ideal that prescribed worship and the other obligations of the sacred laws as the focus of life, and it insisted that Muslims excise all beliefs and practices that it regarded as contrary to Islamic teachings. This attempt to make Islam the most important influence in the lives of Indonesians was not new in Islamic history, for Islam has always demanded such commitment. The Persis message was significant precisely because it was a reiteration of the historical Islamic ideal within a nation which had been converted to Islam for only a relatively short time, and where indigenous religious institutions had not developed to a point where they could facilitate such an ideal. The message of the Persatuan Islam wanted to hasten the development of new and needed "Islamic" institutions, to deepen and broaden faith and practice in Indonesia, and, thereby, make Islam the dominating influence on Indonesians and on Indonesian national life. This approach, which was so revolutionary when Persis activists first began their work, is now common currency in the Indonesian Islamic community at the turn of the 21st century, when emphasis is on standard teachings of Islam and promotion of a faith that is not unduly mixed with cultural characteristics of earlier Indonesian civilization. The entire Persis message is still not acceptable in Indonesia today, but the goal and the teachings would be very much appreciated.

RETROSPECT

The Persatuan Islam still exists in the year 2000, and retains its commitment to intensification of religious faith, belief and behavior in the Indonesian region. While it never regained the profile and stature it had during the earlier part of the century, the association remained active throughout the Guided Democracy (1958–1966) and New Order (1966–1999) eras. Significantly it jettisoned only one part of its program, i.e., the political one, so that activists eschewed politics altogether, or took a much different, muted tact. When involved politically, members were much more identified with other organizations than they had been earlier. More importantly, its educational efforts continued and even took center stage with a continued expansion of facilities at Bandung, Bangil and several other centers in West Java and the Riau area. Ties with Middle Eastern institutions, especially Al-Azhar University in Egypt, became important in the overall context of its efforts. Also, as if to preserve its uniqueness, it was slow to recognize the authority for establishing teaching credentials vested in the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, and only made agreements with that government agency in the 1990's when considerable pressure was placed on all remaining institutions outside the government program to do so. As well, information and intensification efforts continued, with many of its returnees from the Middle East taking prominent roles.

There has been a continuation of the publishing role throughout the years. Three important examples will illustrate the effort. In the 1970's Endang Saifuddin Anshari published a book of polemic aimed against the modernizing wing of the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam-HMI (Young Muslims' Association) led by Nurcholish Madjied, and generally opposed that trend, that was to so strikingly capture the loyalty of young Muslim intellectuals over the next quarter of a century.[1] Anshari indicated that there were limits to the modernism he and others were interested in undertaking and laid out a defense of that position. But in this effort he was seen as a member of the

[1] Endang Saifuddin Anshari, *Kritik atas Faham dan Gerakan "Pembaharuan" Drs. Nurcholish Majid* (Bandung, 1973).

HMI, not as a Persis activist. A second publication by Abdul Kadir Hassan was more technically religious in tone, dealing as it did with a study of *hadīth* and how they should properly be analyzed.[2] It was highly reflective of the science of *hadīth* examination that emerged in the classical era of Islam, without much effort to show how modern examination should proceed; still it was proposed that such examination had relevance to today's world. The third publication was *The Muslims* magazine,[3] which continued to discuss behavior, based on scripture, relevant to the twentieth-century Muslim. It is highly reminiscent of the work done by Ahmad Hassan earlier in the century, and it is a tribute to his legacy that his influence has lasted so long.

I visited the Bandung headquarters four times—in 1963, 1967, 1987 and 1995 and the Bangil center twice, in 1963 and 1995. On every occasion the members showed high interest in my visits and demonstrated the best Indonesian hospitality to celebrate those occasions. Especially on the first visits, when many of the politically-oriented members were still living, I expected to face militancy and toughness, but was pleasantly surprised to find nearly everyone interested in my study, willing to live with my judgments, and helpful in gathering materials. They only insisted that I change one item in my original manuscript, that dealing with the organization's position on the method of sighting the moon at the beginning and end of the fasting month, which I regarded as simply a technical matter, but they saw as a matter of correctness. My other judgments, which were not always favorable to them, were viewed as obvious and as reflecting my independent position; there was no quarreling about those judgments. That reaction surprised me greatly, considering the unrelenting attacks they had made on their political adversaries earlier. At the same time they did not abandon their life-style while I visited. At Bandung I met men and women, boys and girls, because there is a certain Sundanese life-style that is maintained there in which limited contact is made between sexes, although there are clear lines of some separation as well. The women at Bandung even met with me in 1967 to express their disappointment that I had not included anything in my original study about their role in Islamic propaganda and intensification activities; they had prerogatives and used them. At Bangil, on the other hand, the line between men and women was much more demarcated and I always met and did all

[2] Abdul Qadir Hassan, *Ilmu Mushthalah Hadiets* (Bandung, 1983).
[3] *Al-Muslimun.*

my business with men, and I ate with men. Even when I was accompanied to the 1995 meeting by a woman officer from the US Consulate in Surabaya, women from the Persatuan Islam were not included in our discussions, until late in the afternoon when the wife of the editor of the publishing section stopped by to take the woman diplomat on a tour of the girl's school. In general I found the Bangil center much more rigorous in its interpretation of Islamic behavior than at Bandung. But in my last visits to both places I found a strong identification with the rest of the Indonesian community of believers that was not as apparent as it had been earlier, and also a stronger tolerance of views that did not necessarily correspond with their earlier attitudes.

Finally, I would note that in my work on education development projects in Indonesia and in the courses I taught at McGill University in the 1990's, I have met and worked with graduates of the Persatuan Islam schools. It must be stated that those I met were only one sector of the graduates—those who went on to higher education and emerged as scholars, a very small group of not more than 10. All liked the training they had received at Persis schools and felt that they understood the essence of Islamic fundamentals very well. But equally, all expressed some misgivings about their association with an organization that had a historical reputation for militancy and outspokenness in propounding its views. As one articulate graduate put it, "Others regard us as fanatics, and most of us are not fanatics at all!" Neither did I find that such a label fit any of those that I came in contact with, but I, too, have heard the charge against the Persatuan Islam itself and against its associates. But probably the most striking testimony to the teachings of the Persatuan Islam occurred at an Indonesian university elevation-to-professor ceremony. There I marched to the ceremony with a senior professor, who was a highly successful medical doctor, who had interned in the US at a prestigous health center, and was regionally noted for his professionalism and modern approach to medicine. I had had considerable contact with him and his family for over a year and recognized him as not only accomplished and every urbane, but as a thoroughly committed Muslim, reflecting a high moral tone. When we discussed the influences on him, he contended that Ahmad Hassan's *Queries and Resolutions*[4] had served as a moral guide for him in helping him

[4] *Sual-Jawab.*

to bring the teachings of Islam to a personal fulfilment in his life. When I asked whether he belonged to the Persatuan Islam itself, he replied that he would not do that, as it would make him a "fanatic." Obviously there is a difference between accepting the contents of the thinking of Persis writers and becoming organizationally associated with them. That observation is a good place to end this study.

The moving finger writes and having writ moves on . . .

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This glossary of terms is intended only to briefly identify foreign words and terms appearing in the text of this essay. More detailed definitions can be found in basic works on Islam and in books on Indonesia. The definitions given below are taken chiefly from the T.P. Hughes, *A Dictionary of* Islam, C. Glassè, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam, Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch Oost-Indië*, and H.M. Federspiel, *A Dictionary of Indonesian Islam.*

abangan (Javanese) Muslims who follow religious practices loosely and regard customary practices carried over from pre-Islamic periods as important culturally.

adat or *ʿādat* (Arabic) In Islamic law, a legal term designating a custom which is recognized by Muslim jurists as valid in some instances. The word has been taken into Malay and other languages of the Indonesian Archipelago to mean all things that are custom, usage or practice.

ahl al-kitāb (Arabic) Monotheists other than the Muslims, whom Islam recognizes as kindred souls, who are to be honored and treated kindly because they constitute communities founded by prophets sent by God.

ahl as-sunnah wa al-jamāʿāh (Arabic) An epithet used by Sunnī Muslims to describe themselves, usually in apposition to the Shiʿah and other sects regarded as suspect by the Sunnī Muslims. Generally the followers of the religious teachings of al-Ashʿarī (d. 935); and/or al-Māturīdī (d. 944) and the legal teachings of one of the recognized legal schools, such as Shāfiʿī.

Allāh (Arabic) God, who is regarded by Muslims as single in form, all-powerful, the creator of all things, and the master of the Day of Judgment.

Allāhu Akbar (Arabic) "God is Great," a religious ejaculation, uttered by believers at key moments of life in praise of God.

amr maʾrūf nahi munkar (Arabic) Promotion of good and the banishment of evil. In Muslim jurisprudence a principle justifying communal actions aimed at practices and behavior regarded as violating the norms of the Muslim community.

aqīdah (Arabic) A statement of doctrine, or an article of faith.

Ashʿarite. A reference to orthodox Islam as held by Abū Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 935) and his followers, holding that God is the infinite creator and that human reason is limited to interpreting God's revelation.

āyah (Arabic) A verse of the *Qurʾān.*

bidʿah (Arabic) Innovation; a change in religious belief or action that leads to heresy, but not necessarily to disbelief.

dhikr (Arabic) A formula, such as the ninety-nine names of God, that is incessantly repeated as a means of removing extraneous thoughts from the worshiper's mind and to prepare it for religious contemplation.

dukun (Javanese) A practitioner of magic who claims to possess secret powers which he/she employs to treat illness, cast spells, and create good or bad fortune.

farḍ (Arabic) In Islamic law that which is strictly prescribed and obligatory, the omission of which will be punished, while the execution will be rewarded.

fatwā, pl. fatāwā (Arabic) A religious opinion made by a religious scholar or a judge on the basis of examination of religious sources. The decision is intended to aid individual Muslims, and sometimes religious courts, in determining just what constitutes proper religious behavior. The *fatwa* itself is not binding on any believer, but is considered only to be an advisory opinion.

gamelan (Javanese) The classical Javanese orchestra. An ensemble of stringed and percussion instruments which provides accompaniment for the *wayang* (shadow) plays, and for other occasions.

Ḥadīth (Arabic) Traditions; A narrative concerning the Prophet Muḥammad as passed on orally from one generation of Muslims to another until recorded in the second century A.H. Regarded as scripture second only to the Qur'ān, since Muḥammad's life was considered to have been directed by God.

haji (Indonesian, from Arabic) Honorific often included as part of the title of address for those Indonesian Muslims who have undertaken the pilgrimage to Makkah.

ḥudūd (Arabic). Extreme punishment reserved for murderers, thieves and adulterers, involving death or dismemberment as a penalty.

ʿibadāh (Arabic) Worship, both the practice and the ordinances prescribed for prayer and other rites.

ʿĪd al-fiṭr (Arabic) The feast marking the end of the fasting month, and one of the chief feast days of Islam; it includes a special ritual service. It is known as Hari Raya in Indonesia.

ʿĪsā (Arabic) The Muslim word for "Jesus," who is regarded as a prophet preceding Muḥammad. He is regarded as the herald for ushering in the Day of Judgment.

ijtihād (Arabic) The process of arriving at new judgments in preparation of a fatwā by drawing on the primary sources of Islam (i.e., the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*), as opposed to acceptance of the interpretation of the early scholars of Islam.

Injīl (Arabic) A holy book of the Christians, i.e. the New Testament. Islam holds that the *Injil* was originally similar to the *Qur'ān*, but that Christians have distorted its message.

Isrāʿ (Arabic) The Night Journey, where Muḥammad was transported by a winged horse from Makkah to Jerusalem, then ascended to heaven to converse with God, and then returned to Makkah.

ittibāʿ (Arabic) A practice of eliciting several fatāwā and then following the one the believer holds to be the best interpretation of doctrine or practice.

Jahiliyah (Arabic) The Age of Ignorance; it refers to the state of things in Arabia before the arrival of Islam. Also used, figuratively, in reference to the modern world.

Jakarta Charter (Indonesian: *Piagam Jakarta*) The statement formulated in a sub-commitee preparing for Indonesian independence which recognized the importance of Islam and Islamic law as essential to the new state of Indonesia in 1945. It was not adopted by the full committee.

jawī (Malay) The Malay language employing an Arabic script adapted to accommodate Malay letters and sounds. Widely used in Malaysia, Southern Thailand and Brunei for several hundreds of years, but was dropped for a Romanized script in Indonesia in the early twentieth century.

juz'ʿamma (Arabic) The popular name for the last reading section of the *Qur'ān* which is often memorized and recited by children.

Kaʿabah (Arabic) The "House of God," actually a gray stone construction situated almost in the center of the great mosque at Mekkah. Muslims pray toward the Kaʿabah, and circumambulation of the Kaʿabah is part of prescribed ritual for the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*).

kenduri (Persian) A communal feast noted in Shāfiʿī law books in Indonesia, that became confused, or integrated, with local feast meals. See also *slametan.*

khuṭbah (Arabic) The sermon delivered on Fridays at the time of the meridian (*zuhr*) prayer and at the two major religious (*ʿĪd*) celebrations.

kijai or *kiai* (Indonesian from Persian) A title of respect given *ʿulamā'* in Java and some other places in Indonesia.

Madrasah. See *pesantren.*

Mahayana Buddhism (Sanskrit) One of the two major divisions of Buddhism. The Hinayana school stresses an individualistic search for salvation, while the Mahayana stresses the importance of universal salvation as integral to the good life.

Miʿrāj (Arabic) The miracle in which Muḥammad ascended to heaven, conversed with God about his mission as a prophet, and then returned to earth.

Muḥammad. The founder of the Islam (d. 632), who is recognized by Muslims as a prophet bringing God's revelation to humans. His mission took place at Makkah and Madinah in Arabia.

MULO school (Dutch *Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs*—More Extended Lower Instruction) Lower secondary school system (three years) established by the Dutch for Indonesians in 1903, with instruction in Dutch, English, German, history, science, mathematics and drawing.

Munkar (Arabic) According to popular Muslim belief, one of two angels who asks pertinent questions of the recently deceased to determine whether he is truly a Muslim. If the deceased fails to answer the questions satisfactorily, Munkar, and his associate Nakīr, inflict painful punishment.

Muʿtazilī (Arabic) A sect in the tenth century believing that reason was

superior to revelation. They have been reviled by Sunnī groups as misguided and even heretical.

Nakir (Arabic) An angel; see Munkar.

Naqshabandīyah (Arabic) A popular mystical order of the Islamic world, also important to the development of reformist Islam in Indonesia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

niyyah (Arabic) A short declaration of intention pronounced audibly or mentally, immediately prior to prescribed religious ritual, in which the performer states his intent to perform the act.

Pancasila (Indonesian from Sanskrit) A formulation of five principles put forward by Sukarno in 1945 as the philosophic basis for an Indonesian state and the official ideology of the state after 1958. The principles are "Belief in God," "humanitarianism," "nationalism," "democracy," and "social justice."

pesantren (Javanese) A privately-owned seminary for students studying the religious sciences of Islam. The *pondok* is usually the lodging place of the students at a religious school. Not to be confused with the *madrasah*, which is a school combining religious and general courses in its curriculum and accepts state funds for its operation.

pondok. See *pesantren.*

priyayi (Javanese) Traditional gentry class of Javanese society, noted for its emphasis on refinement and polite form.

Qur'ān (Arabic) In Islam, the word of God revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad, containing a guide for proper religious action.

Quraysh (Arabic) A tribal grouping in Arabia at Makkah into which the Prophet Muḥammad was born. Some Muslims consider the Quraysh a permanent aristocracy among Muslims.

Ramaḍān (Arabic) The holy month in which the *Qur'ān* was revealed. It is the fasting month in which Muslims may not eat, drink or have sexual relations during daylight hours.

rasūl (Arabic) Messenger from God to humankind who brings revelation on how to worship God and live good lives.

ribā (Arabic) Usury; in general any unjustified increase of capital for which no compensation is given.

sai keirei (Japanese) The deep bow toward Tokyo as a token of obeisance to the emperor prior to 1945. In Indonesia during the Japanese Occupation this was part of a daily brief morning ceremony in all government offices, but was disliked by Muslims as similar to the Muslim prayer and, hence, was discontinued.

santri (Javanese) Historically in Indonesia the grouping in society who associated closely with Muslim religious scholars and followed the code of behavior they prescribed. Usually this group first attended Muslim schools (*pesantren*) and afterward honored the teachers there.

sayyid (Arabic) A title commonly taken by persons claiming descent from the Prophet Muḥammad. The term was often used as a means of asserting precedence by Arabs over Southeast Asian Muslims.

Shāfi'ī (Arabic) Referring to a school of jurisprudence in Islam; one of four prominent schools with its particular strength in Indonesia and Egypt.

Shaivism (Sanskrit) An important sect of Hinduism centering on the worship of Shiva. Shaivism has two main systems which are theistic in that they admit to a personal God, but are monistic in that they hold Shiva to be the ultimate Reality, with other realities in some sense identical with him or his creative power.

sharī'ah (Arabic) The sacred law of Islam. Traditionalist Muslims view the *sharī'ah* as the legal system defined by traditional scholars (*fiqh*), while modernists speak of the principles and clear commands from *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* as constituting such sacred law.

Shi'ah (Arabic) The general name for a group of different Muslim sects, the starting point of which is the recognition of 'Alī as the legitimate leader (*khalīfah*) after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad. It constitutes a second orthodox community in Islam, separate from the Sunnī Muslim tradition.

slametan (Javanese from Arabic) A communal feast, popular among the nominal-Muslim (*abangan*) population on Java, given to commemorate important events in individual and public life.

ṣūfī (Arabic) A Muslim mystic belonging to a wide number of orders. In Indonesia mysticism was important until the rise of the modernist Muslim movement, when it was attacked as passive and uninterested in human improvement.

Sunnah (Arabic) The way or customs, especially of the Prophet, as respects his words, behavior and pattern of life, which are considered to be divinely inspired and augmenting the *Qur'ān* as a pattern of conduct for Muslims. In this respect often synonymous with *Ḥadīth*.

Sunnī (Arabic) One of the two major orthodox groups of Islam, centering on the passage of political authority through the first caliphs and on the doctrinal developments of al-Ash'arī and al-Māturīdī.

sūrah; pl. *sūrāt* (Arabic) A chapter of the *Qur'ān*.

Sūrah Yā Sīn (Arabic) The 36th chapter of the Qur'ān, which is often memorized by Muslims and then recited spontaneously in late afternoon and evening as a mark of piety.

tablīgh (Arabic) Informational sessions on Islamic teachings for the edification of the faithful. Such meetings are frequently undertaken by groups seeking greater understanding of religion among the general population.

talqīn (Arabic) Instruction given by a religious teacher at graveside at the close of the burial service to prepare the deceased for the visits of the angels Nakīr and Munkar.

takbīl (Arabic) kissing; a practice whereby a Muslim not descended from the Prophet Muḥammad kneels and kisses the hand of those descended from the Prophet.

taqlīd (Arabic) A term used in Muslim jurisprudence for uncritically accepting legal and theological decisions of a teacher or teachers.

tawhīd (Arabic) A theological term used to express the unity of the Godhead and all things created by Him. It is a fundamental tenet of Islam, and is generally believed by Muslim theologians to contradict the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

Tawrāh (Arabic from the Hebrew *Tora*) In Islam the name of the holy

scripture revealed after the time of Ibrāhīm and Isrā'īl and afterward confirmed by 'Īsā, which contains the "laws of God."

'ulamā'; sing. *'alim* (Arabic) Religious scholars with training in the traditional religious sciences of Islam. They constitute the religious elite of the Muslim community and give direction on how to proceed in important matters.

waqf (Arabic) Pious endowment given by believers for some worthwhile endeavor, often the creation of the mosque or other place of worship.

wayang (Javanese *wayang*) A play or performance depicting legendary stories, both of Javanese origin and from the Hindu Ramayana. The *wayang kulit* is a shadow play and the *wayang orang* is performed by human actors.

Zabūr (Arabic) The scripture sent to the Jews through the Prophet Dāwūd, containing a religious law like that in the *Qur'ān*. The Psalms of the Old Testament are often considered to be the remnants of that scripture.

zakāt (Arabic) A religious duty imposed on all Muslims to give a portion of their wealth, as prescribed by religious law, in alms to the poor. It is one of the five commands of practical religious behavior.

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Abbreviations of Publications and Publishing Houses

AUFS	American University Field Staff, New York, N.Y., U.S.A.
BKITLV	*Bijdragen Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Leiden, the Netherlands
CMIP	Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., U.S.A.
ENOI	*Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch Oost-Indië*, Leiden, the Netherlands
HRAF	Human Relations Area Files, New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A.
ISEAS	Institute of Southeast East Asian Studies, Singapore
JMBRAS	Journal Malayan Branch Royal Asiatic Society, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
JPRS	Joint Publications Research Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.
LKiS	Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
LP3ES	Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan, dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial, Jakarta, Indonesia
SEAP	Southeast Asian Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., U.S.A.

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Abdulkadir Hassan, Chairman of the Universitas "Pesantren" Persatuan Islam, Kijai Alauddin, Abdullah Musa, General Director of *Al-Muslimun*, Mohammad Ali Alhamidy, and several other officials of the Persatuan Islam's educational system, at Bangil on July 13, 1963.

K.H.E. Abdurrahman, General Chairman of the Persatuan Islam, and Junus Anis, Chairman of the Pemuda Persatuan Islam, at Bandung on July 21, 1963 and January 20, 1967.

Z.A. Achmad, former member of parliament for Masjumi and a recognized specialist on Islamic law and the state, July 1963.

Junus Anis, Chairman of the Pemuda Persatuan Islam, at Bandung on July 21, 1963 and when he was assistant director of the Pesantren Persatuan Islam at Bandung, January 1967.

Timur Jaylani, Director of the Section for Higher Education of the Department of Religious Affairs, in Djakarta, July 9, 1963.

K.H.A. Latief Muchtar, Presdient of the Islamic Union, and tour of facilities at Persatuan Islam central office and pesantren, Bandung, Indonesia, September 1994.

Roundtable discussion with the editorial staff of *Al-Muslimun* and the teaching staff of the Pesantren Persatuan Islam at Bangil, Indonesia, October 1996.

Moehammad Natsir, chief consultant to the Persatuan Islam, and former Secretary-General of the Masjumi Party, July 1963.

Mohammad Sofwanhadi, publisher of the Surabaja daily *Suara Rakjat*, during an automobile trip from Surabaja to Bangil and return on July 13, 1963.

Fakih Usman, General Secretary of the Muhammadijah and former Minister of Religious Affairs, in Djakarta on July 10, 1963.

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The Persatuan Islam still exists in the year 2000, and retains its commitment to intensification of religious faith, belief and behavior in the Indonesian region. While it never regained the profile and stature it had during the earlier part of the century, the association remained active throughout the Guided Democracy (1958–1966) and New Order (1966–1999) eras. Significantly it jettisoned only one part of its program, i.e., the political one, so that activists eschewed politics altogether, or took a much different, muted tact. When involved politically, members were much more identified with other organizations than they had been earlier. More importantly, its educational efforts continued and even took center stage with a continued expansion of facilities at Bandung, Bangil and several other centers in West Java and the Riau area. Ties with Middle Eastern institutions, especially Al-Azhar University in Egypt, became important in the overall context of its efforts. Also, as if to preserve its uniqueness, it was slow to recognize the authority for establishing teaching credentials vested in the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, and only made agreements with that government agency in the 1990's when considerable pressure was placed on all remaining institutions outside the government program to do so. As well, information and intensification efforts continued, with many of its returnees from the Middle East taking prominent roles.

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